

# Yellowwood and Environs

## PART 1

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## INTRODUCTION

Towering high and proud above the Du Toits' Kloof valley is the steep and imposing so called Yellowwood amphitheatre. It is part of the De Le Bat ridges. Some of the hardest and boldest trad routes in South Africa form a cicatrize over the grey and yellow rock. It is also home to an anomalous bolted route called Newborn (29) as well as some Euro hybrid routes but by and large, the amphitheatre is almost devoid of fixed gear and the odd piton or bolt are so old and worn as to be untrustworthy. The main wall stands some 270m tall at its highest point and climbing any of the routes ground up, on-sight in a day is very rarely achieved. Most attempts are met with failure for a variety of reasons to be detailed later.

The right side of the Amphitheatre is guarded by the knife edge **Smalblaar ridge** 16, a Mamacos masterpiece and one of the classic climbs in South Africa. Further west and around the corner of Smalblaar ridge are the **Chess pieces** that are home to excellent 4 to 6 pitch routes on good quality rock, including "**No More Bells**" 19.

To left of the main **Yellowwood Amphitheatre** are series of buttresses bordered on the left by the route **Lekker Time** and named known from left to right as **Timerity, Divine Time, Tea Time, Fine Time** and the **Fun Time buttresses**.

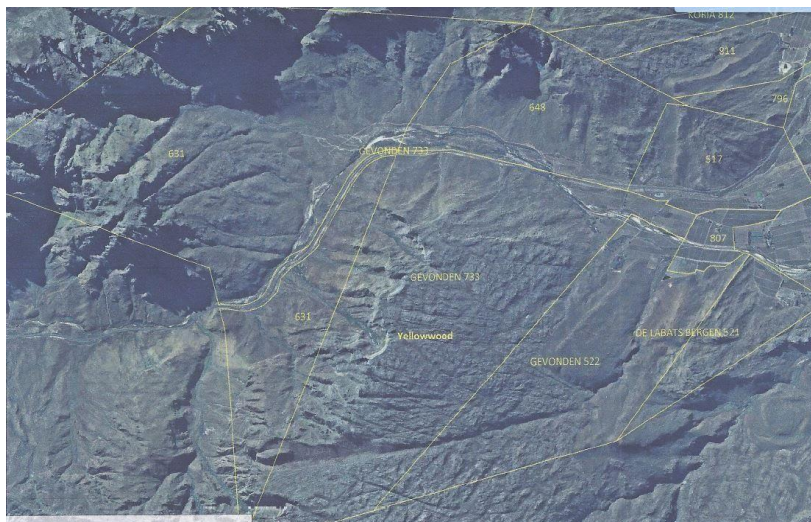
**Small Time Buttress** is easy to identify and approach as it is on the right (west side) of the ravine just right of the approach trail some 200m or so below the base of the main amphitheatre. The dihedral forming the route **Classic Corner** is unmistakable.

Further down the ravine on the left or east side is the **Sublime Buttress** that tops out more or less level with the base of **Lekker Time**. It is bordered on its left by the route **Red Waterfall Face**. On its left is a huge and impressive blank appearing lichen covered face (dubbed **Lichen Face**) that has yet to be properly explored and developed.

To the left is the unmistakable **Black Waterfall Face** route identifiable by the enduring black streaks on the rock. **Not the Best Time** climbs the grey ramp and skirts past the right of the huge overhang further right.

Over the last few years some other challenging modern routes nearby have been opened and are included in this guide. As at June 2017 **Righteous Condemnation, Zephyr, Twilight Years** and **Masquerade** are included.

The Ravine, Amphitheatre and most of the climbable rock is on the farm Gevonden 733 and is privately owned by the Dave Richter family trust. There is tacit permission to climb at Yellowwood by the beneficiaries of the trust provided we do not engage in any eco-unfriendly practises. Access from the road directly below crosses Erf 631, owned by Mr. Michael John T'Sas Rolfes. Again, no official permission has been obtained to access Yellowwood ravine environs as at June 2017.



**Satellite view of Yellowwood ravine and environs.**

The approach to Yellowwood Amphitheatre involves an 840m elevation hike starting at 360m above sea level to the base of the main amphitheatre that is at 1,200m. The main wall then continues vertically top out at just below 1,500m above sea level. The water point at the base of the **Divine Time Buttress** is about 100m lower than the centre of the base of the main amphitheatre.

The hike to the base of the main wall usually takes the average party 90 minutes to 2 hours to ascend depending on their level of fitness and weight carried. (Approach to the **Divine Time Buttress** saves about 5 minutes.)

My love affair with Yellowwood amphitheatre started in the late nineteen eighties after I had moved to Cape Town from Johannesburg when, with Tony Dick, I climbed "**Armageddon Time**" and on-sighted the crux pitch. I also climbed "**Blood is Sweeter than Honey**" soon after that. I found both routes to be very bold and scary and hard for their grades. In fact, Tony and I did not complete the final pitch of **Blood is Sweeter than Honey** as he thought the second last pitch that he led was way scary.

Small children kept me busy and besides two visits with Brits on the first BMC/MCSA exchange in 2002 when I climbed the first of the "**Armageddon Direct**" (26) pitches with Dave Birkett, I paid little interest until 2007. Leo Rust and Tony had just completed the first free ascent of "**Prime Time**" that again validated the reputation of the committing and serious nature of the climbing on the main amphitheatre. So, with Anthony Hall I went to check it out. We got to just below the crux pitch of the route and it took me a further two attempts to climb it free to the top.

It was clear that the main amphitheatre was hard and complicated and very bold to climb and I was intimidated by it no less than other climbers. Nevertheless, I felt that it deserved its reputation as a hard-core trad climbing destination and it would bide its time until a new era of bold strong climbers would come along to tick new routes.

"**Newborn**", the anomalous sport climb was finally established in 2007 and occasionally climbed, but further development of trad routes stalled.

Foreign climbers came along and started interfering with the character of the trad nature of the amphitheatre by placing unnecessary bolts. This prompted me into action and "**Fun Time**" was created in 2009. There was a further flurry of activity on the main amphitheatre with the development by Hilton Davies and friends of "**Judgment Day**" and by Robert Zipplies and Johann Lanz of "**African Time**". Many first ascents on the Chess Pieces were also done around 2010.

In 2008 I climbed **“Prime Time”** again with Ged Desforges a visiting Brit and fashioned, on trad gear, the upper half of the **Down Time** Abseil route. Ged later wrote this about **Prime Time**.

*“However, the trad you boys have got is certainly something to be considered carefully. My screensaver at work, and picture on my fridge is of my foot, below which can be seen a notorious Cape Town orthopaedic surgeon abseiling down, with much of the yellowwood amphitheatre beneath him. In between me and him are several bits of gear, put in place to keep him in contact with the rock. I doubt there'd be much bouncing if the anchor ripped. Above me is a solitary rock 6. This was one of the most memorable moments of my year/life. Luckily, I managed to take a snap to etch it in my mind. In the distance the sun was setting, and half an hour later we'd be abbing down the lower half of the wall in pitch black. This was the end of one of the most memorable days climbing I've ever had.*

*The pitch with the crucial offset blue alien was fun, and the steep finger crack was great until i got cramp in my arms and nearly peeled off. But the crux pitch! Now I'm not one for foul language, but fuck me. That was something. I just couldn't make myself make the moves onto the detached, booming pillar. I hung on the belay, trying to force myself to do it, knowing how much Snort wanted to get up this route. He'd done that pitch, and once I'd committed he coaxed me up to the roof, warning me to save the green alien for higher up. Fuck that, the first decent break and I stuffed in every cam I could find to put some emotional distance between me and that pillar. The pinchy, pumpy, crumbly stuff above that was the stuff dreams are made of, especially when you're staring a perfect green alien slot in the eyes, wishing you'd saved it. That belay was a nice one. Stumbling down to the road at midnight, after 14 hours on the go, a long way from Cape Town, and an even longer way from Sheffield, tired, hungry, thirsty, bleeding; I couldn't have been happier.*

*Point is you lot have got some of the finest adventure climbing imaginable. Don't waste it. I'll be back soon, so keep your filthy mits off that crack line we abbed down.*

A little later in April 2008, Robert Breyer and I carried up a drill via **Smalblaar** to bolt it with the idea that it would make a route, a project that I am still working on with James Smith almost 10 years on.

Work started on **Fantastic Time** in 2010 and **Show Time** in 2011. Both routes required a long time to finesse and free climb.

Around that time, I cast my eye to **East Buttresses** but other than the yellow-orange-red panels on **Tea Time** and **Divine Time** Buttresses it all seemed a bit dodgy. With Jonathan Hajos and Ilya Kohl we did do **Tea Time 24** that was OK but hardly inspiring as a shorter route compared to the routes far around the corner on the Chess Pieces.

I stayed intrigued though especially with the upside-down triangular “headwall” where **Timerity** and **Another Fckn Time** now goes. But my yellowwood experience suggested that this would be bold, blanc, super hard and scary climbing. I was found to be wrong some time later.

With Dion van Zyl I ventured on to the next buttress and one of the finest routes at the grade I have ever climbed, **Divine Time 19** was born. We also found a [water source](#) that allows for the catchment and storage of water for up to 9 months of the year.

It was then a treasure trove of trad climbing was revealed to me and “since that time” a host of ground up routes have been created with relative ease, not only on the **Divine** and **Tea Time** Buttresses but all over the rock buttresses left of the main amphitheatre and further down on the left where now resides the **Sublime Time** routes. If you care to read the names of climbers that partnered me on the first ascents it reads like a list of who's who in the trad climbing community of the Western Cape

Despite several projects on the go by Willem Le Roux and I, James Smith and I and Tini Versfeld and friends, the main amphitheatre has thwarted the development of a new route since around 2012 and it remains to be seen whether **Down Time** will morph into **Up Time**.



Yellowwood, like Blouberg in the preceding years, has fascinated, engaged and enchanted me for the last 10 years or so. It has kept me interested, intrigued, fit, safe, (so far), and relatively bold. It allows for wonderful testing adventure climbing and the routes that I have crafted there I can share with just about anyone with any climbing ability. I can guarantee you that if you enjoy steep, airy exposed climbing on trad you will come home exhilarated and tired even if you climb one of the easiest routes like “Lekker Time”.

There is nothing quite like it anywhere in the world: bold, technical steep, airy climbing an hour's drive from one of the great modern cities of the world and 90 minutes' walk. There is nary a bolt on the vast majority of the routes and (almost) no other people or chalked holds to be seen.

What is so compelling about climbing at Yellowwood is the human experience I have enjoyed with so many friends over the years. A few years ago, Neels Havenga declared that he was my new best friend and from this has evolved the tongue-in-cheek acronym NBF as it pertains to anyone who climbs with me at Yellowwood. To this end I must have climbed with a whole bunch of different people at Yellowwood and so many have become OBFs or Old Best Friends. There is no better way than to get to know people than on a route at Yellowwood where there is time to chat on the hike (even though I do most of the pontificating) and there is always a hot cup of tea at the base before and after a route to wash down the staple Eet-sum-mor biscuits.

I have lost count of how many different people I have shared a rope or ropes with and the list includes just about everyone that trad climbs in the cape and many that do not. Besides all my OBF's and especially Margaret my wife, some of my NBF's that have accompanied me up there include both my sons Nick and Dunc, some rather posh ladies (dare I call them that) from Constantia who walked up just to have tea, one leopard and many many others. I cannot remember having a bad experience there.

NBF's are invariably entertained by me on the hike up and are subjected to some diatribe or other, fondly designated TWATS (The World According To Snort) by an OBF, Hugh Willis. I have also been called the POG, (Pontificating Old Goat) by Stewart Middlemiss another OBF who lives in the USA. Be that as it may, all my NBF's become OBF's even though some would not care to admit it.

A favourite NBF victim would be visiting Brit trad climber and just recently I sojourned up there with Jamey Barker and did the first ascent of **Adventure Time 21**. What a way to seal a friendship bond that will endure for ever even if only through the words in a guide book. I mean, how cool is that. Darn site better than getting smashed in a pub with your mates on a rainy day although a beer or two at Du Toit's Lodge is always called for after a route.

Crafting these adventurous routes of all grades to share with NBF's has been my pleasure and my joy and a legacy I am rather proud about. But I am not done yet and hopefully there is “Plenty of Time”, “Hoards of Time” and “Lots of Time” before “Time's Up” and I am “Out of Time”.

## TATS: Trad according to Snort at Yellowwood

The Caveats:

1. **“Ad idem”** with your partner.
2. Preparation
3. Gear
4. Communication
5. Efficiency
6. Belaying techniques
7. Gear placing techniques

8. Safety tips
9. Sport vs trad
10. ESCAPING OFF ROUTES: FUN and UNFUN ABSEILING.

## 1. Ad idem with your partner. The NBF

Climbing is a human experience. Neels Havenga, aka Dark Horse alluded to the concept of the new best friend NBF and I discovered that every time you go climbing it must be with your new best friend. If you do this you will be safe and have a great time. In this regard, your choice of climb must match both your and your partner's expectations in terms of your abilities and desires. The advantage of many years of experience is that I can climb with just about anyone with any capability and have a real good day out at Yellowwood. So, I can go do a route with Jimbo Smith or Clinton Martinengo and hang around while they might work a new grade 30 pitch high up on Yellowwood amphitheatre or go and climb Yellowwood crack grade 15 or so with two of my oldest best friends Margaret my wife and Hugh Willis.

So, the most important factor of trad climbing, particularly at Yellowwood is to choose the correct route that fits the expectations of you and your NBF.

## 2. Preparation.

Weather, water, approach, route description, descent and escape are the main issues. The correct gear is also important.

Weather is self-explanatory but bear in mind that weather in the mountains is unpredictable a lot of the time. In South Africa light, reflective colours are not very sexy and photogenic but long sleeve sun shirts and loose fitting pants are best for our sunny weather. Sun screen is an imperative.

Approach shoes are important in terms of weight and sturdiness and you must even choose your climbing shoes carefully depending on the weather. Hot weather requires looser fitting shoes as your feet will swell and hurt after a few pitches. Carrying up a pair of light weight "Crocs" or cheaper knock-offs is advised,

All these aspects are best discussed with someone who knows the routes well and your safety and chance of success is highly dependent on good preparation and local knowledge..

One of the best ways to embark on climbing routes at YW is to climb with an experienced and efficient climber. Second best is to pick his/her brains for beta and to carefully scrutinize the route descriptions that will be found on climbing blogs and websites or in this book.

There is also the hard core way of familiarizing yourself with the terrain as exemplified this weekend by my NBF Teodor Iliev. Having never been there before he embarked on his adventure walked up on Friday night, the 23 June 2017 starting around 9pm. Lacking local knowledge he started up the which is the approach to the routes to Du Toit's Peak. After bush-whacking through dense fynbos till 1 am he bivvied somewhere along the "Klip rivier". Using the whatsapp location pin, we found each other in Cyberspace. Johann Lanz and I were on a mission to climb one of the easier routes on the Chess Pieces and in so doing get high resolution photos for this guide. Teodor found his way back to the road and carrying food, bivvy gear, and a rack and two ropes eventually found his way to the **Snotter Camp** and eventually came round the Smalblaar ridge to find us at 2pm when we were well on our way up **Checkerboard**, a route on the right turret of **The Castle**. We eventually finished the route and fashioned a very user friendly abseil route to join him at the base. Teodor staid over alone on the Saturday night alone! Hoping that some other mates would join him for a route the next day. This did not materialize and so tomorrow the 27<sup>th</sup> we shall head up there again!.

High resolution digital photo-topos have made route finding so much easier. So make sure you have a large screen smart phone with decent battery life loaded with the info and photos.

Take the correct amount of water. Too much and too little slows you down. You never need to carry water for a three-pitch route unless you are very slow and climbing in the sun which would be stupid. Depending on the weather forecast and time of year, main amphitheatre routes at Yellowwood that are sun-bathed before mid-day require at least 1.5 litres per person. All the shorter routes if they are within your comfort grade can be done with less water as they are in the shade longer.

If the ambient temperature is cold, a trick I learned over the last few years is to fill collapsible or 500ml or 350ml plastic cold-drink or Nalgene bottles with very hot or even boiling water. Very hot water may result in the bottle contracting and also cause them to leak. Avoid filling them completely so as to avoid distorting the neck of the bottle. Make two of these as “hand-warmers” per person and climb with them in your pockets. You then also have warm water to drink. Hot tea or even hot “Game” (an isotonic powder drink available in South Africa) can be used to fill the bottles.

I find snacks important on any route at Yellowwood other than the one pitch routes at **“Small Time Crag.”** Many climbers prefer expensive energy bars, nuts and dried fruit. Other than biltong (dried meat) I do not see the point of taking dehydrated food up a route if one has to carry water in any case. My preferences are in order: wine gums that I keep in a pocket to eat on demand, nougat, (preferably Wedgewood that is not as sugary as other brands), sweet chocolate if not too hot, salty potato crisps for a long hard routes and biltong or droe wors. For full day routes some solid food like a sandwich and possibly a fruit is also nice to have.

Approach and descent: Make sure you know where you are going. Take physical and mental photos while approaching the crag so as to have a reference if it gets late and dark. Make mental notes about distances.

### 3. **Gear:**

Most inexperienced people carry far too much gear for fear of running out. The stuff is heavy and cumbersome and will slow you down.

Check the route description (RD) and see what gear you need. A good RD will inform you if you need doubles of anything or special pieces.

If you are worried about gear then learn to back clean as you get higher. Not close to the ground though

The question of what gear is best frequently arises on climbing forums. The answer is not really which brand or type, but rather the one that you and your partner have experience in.

To this end and when it comes to trad gear, I have literally used just about every device made in the last 42 years. I am not brand sensitive and have about 5 racks with a mix of Black Diamond, Metolius, Trango, DMM, Wild Country Mammut, Camp, Rock Empire Fixe etc. Familiarize yourself with all types of gear so that you can climb a route with whatever is available.

Some cams work better than others in specific settings. Aliens definitely **seem** better than other cams in horizontal placements and Black Diamond tricams fit in narrower widths but are expensive and stiff.

Double axle cams are heavier than non, but can be used as nuts and have an increased range and thereby are more versatile.

Single wire Wild Country nuts are light but are less stiff for high placements and also the lack of stiffness makes it a little more difficult to yank out. As doubles they are light provide and their shapes allow for more placement options.

Hexes are actually now superfluous and in any case very few people know how to cam them into cracks. They are relatively light as a leaver piece or as an additional large passive piece of gear.

### **A standard rack includes:**

A set of RP's or micro nuts on 1 biner.

A set of nuts BD, WC or Wallnuts to size 10 on 2 biners. If carrying doubles have a different brand or WC single wire nuts

A full set of cams: Aliens, Metolius BD to Camelot 3 size one on each biner.

4 draws and 8 extendable quickdraws made with 60cm slings or 12 extendable quickdraws with a biner each side. (If multipitch climbing replace or add 1 or 2 dyneema slings with 7mm rope slings as leaver slings.)

1 120cm sling

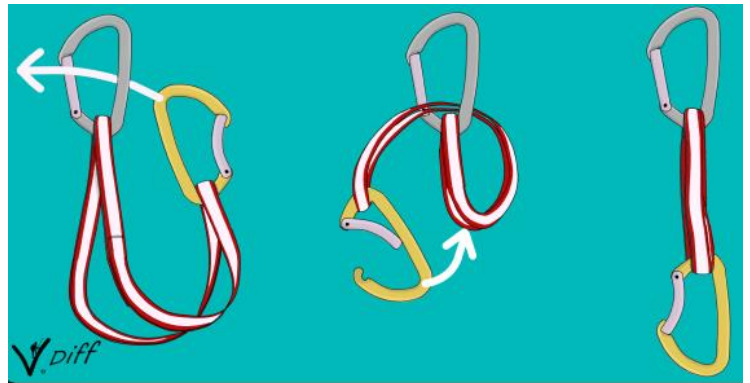
1 nut pick **each** with emergency tape on it.

1 belay device on a locking biner

1 spare screw gate! **Only 1.**

1 prussic chord 6 or 7mm

Chalk bag tied on with 6 or 7 mm chord.



**ROPES:** Use the thinnest lightest ropes you can tolerate. 50m is good for 99.99% of routes. Ropes don't break, ever! They cut! So, thicker ropes are not an imperative with regards to breakage. 2 ropes separated when you climb reduces the risk of cutting. There is no record of 2 ropes breaking. The recommended ropes for Yellowwood is Mammut Twilight ropes. Blue Water Ice-floss ropes are about 64m long and work well on **Down Time**.

**Single ropes:** are not recommended at Yellowwood and if you choose to climb with one then take at least 2 extra 60cm and 1 extra 120cm sling. Also consider making shorter pitches.

1l. Water bottle that can be attached to harness with frozen game with a leaver biner.

Packable Fleece or down jacket. Wind Jacket/shell.

Light descent shoes. Crocs

Buff.

Helmet. Solid plastic if route is on dodgy rock.

Cape, knife, head torch, bivvy bag on light weight accessory biners.

Make shorter pitches that are less tiring, warmer, and allow for better communication.

If you double up on gear then take extra small cams to one inch as they are light.

**What is the best way to rack your gear:**



What you are used to is best. If you are learning to trad climb do it my way by distributing the rack all around you on a bandolier and your harness loops. The critical pieces are on the bandolier and are accessible to both your hands. A bandolier also allows you to leave the rack behind if you do a crank or two at your limit and then you can haul it up afterwards.

Slings, micro-nuts, heavy cams, water and accessories (jacket, knife etc), on your harness.

Nuts and cams to one or two inch on a bandolier that is full strength and can double as a sling.



#### 4. Communication:

Is there cell phone connection? Make sure you both have a smart phone that also has a torch function.

If it is windy make shorter pitches.

3 sharp yanks on the rope is off-belay, 2 sharp yanks: climb-when-ready.

#### 5. Efficiency:

The only way to learn efficiency is to do multi-pitch routes with experienced climbers. If you do a 10 pitch climb and you lose just 5 to 10 minutes per pitch you will lose almost 2 hours in a day. That means 2 hours longer to be in the sun or in the freezing cold. It adds to the tedium and can frazzle nerves.

Some tips:

As you approach a stance place a really good piece if one is obvious as the stance may not be easy to secure. That means that even if your stance is suboptimal there is a good piece between you and oblivion.

Once on the stance say off-belay as soon as you find **one good anchor** unless it is a hanging stance when two is better. If you are on a flat ledge one good piece equalized to your harness using one rope with a clove-hitch and your butt firmly planted on the ground is pretty bomb proof. After finding another piece use the second rope to equalize to your harness. Using slings or chord wastes time and uses up gear and causes a clutter-fuck.

If you are three-up then make sure that you are in a position to untie one of the ropes from your harness to hand over to one of your party and equalize the second anchor using a length of either rope to your harness using the lever biner and a clove hitch.

If the route is not overhanging and you are with competent climbers that will climb quickly it is best to belay off your harness with or without a pulley. Using belay devices in guide mode usually

requires that you stand rather than sit and has a host of potential problems. You can very easily set up a locking system using a reverso or similar device so you can escape the system if needed.

If you are to continue leading the next pitch pile the rope carefully at your feet so you can flip it over and make sure the rope ends to you escape under the pile together.

While your buddies are climbing rack all the gear onto the bandolier or sling to hand over as the next leader arrives. Do not hand single pieces of gear to the next leader. It is inefficient and results in dropsy.

If you have followed and cleaned the pitch and are to take over the lead, the previous leader should tie you off by making a knot on the belay side of the rope. This is all that is needed if you are on a big ledge. You do not need to clip into the stance with a sling unless it is hanging and then the belayer must be ready to tie you off with a clove hitch on the rope, not a sling – it wastes time and clutters.

While you rack up the previous leader feeds you a snack and water and sorts out the slings and nuts that you cleaned. The previous leader can also consider the RD and other factors like sun cream and the like.

## **6. Techniques of belaying**

Learn to use an Edelrid Joule.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EAHHgN5BdG4>

If using standard belay devices so as a BD ATC, never let go the rope and wrap it round your hand or arm.

Feed out the rope in advance of the climber clipping the gear and lock down. If the climber falls off as they are trying to clip and you are feeding out the rope your natural instinct is the grab the rope on the sharp end that you are feeding out and you will get a rope burn and even let go the rope with your other hand. The Edelrid Jules are safer in this situation than any other device I have ever used including a grigri.

If you are feeling sleepy or need to do things that may distract you from holding the rope, add a prussic connected to your harness or to the anchor. This will also assist in escaping the belay system if needed.

If using a belay device in guide mode a very useful and comfy way of belaying is to be seated facing out with the guide mode ring attached to the anchor and the normal locking biner with the ropes looped around attached to your belay loop. This requires the anchor to be extended to a point that it is next to your waist. This allows for the best of both worlds, easy belaying as you would belay a lead climber, but it also has a locking mode which you can easily escape if needed. This method takes a bit of practise but is well worth learning.

Once above deck fall range do not ratchet the rope. Keep a nice loop of slack in the system. Ratcheting destroys confidence in your partner and will result in an EBF (ex best friend) soon.

Consider where your leader is going and advise on extensions and directionals.

Belay prism specs are useful.

Stand up and even scramble up after the climber if a deck fall is imminent and be ready to take in the rope.

## 7. Techniques of placing gear:

Understand the following concepts:

1. Fall factor
2. Upwards and other directional placements.
3. <http://www.climbing.com/skills/learn-this-how-to-use-directionals/>

<http://www.climbing.co.za/2012/02/ping-ping-ping-thud/>

4. Opposing pieces  
<http://www.climbing.com/skills/nuts-101/>
5. Threaded nuts.
6. Drag: The first piece never causes much drag. Always use long slings if there are overlaps or the pitch wanders.
7. 2 pieces between you and a deck fall
8. Small cam triggers must be reachable.
9. Cams walk and if a crack or rail is flared with it being wider deeper in, the cam can fall uselessly into the back of the crack or rail.
10. Cams can be moved “walked” up a crack as you climb allowing a comforting top rope situation. The cam is not disconnected from the rope which improves efficiency. If you do this make sure that you are not left without protection at all below you
11. Cams like nuts must be placed in the line of force in vertical cracks.

Wrong



Correct





12. Protecting traverses and overhangs and dihedrals. Try place a piece at or just over the lip of an overhang. Your next point must be well above the lip to avoid you breaking your lower leg (tibia) by striking the lip with your shin if you fall. In dihedrals (corners) try find placements out of the corner on the sides. Traverses require both ropes clipped if 2 people are following but use separate biners with one being longer than the other with an extender. Protect tricky moves before and afterwards.

13. Knots as pro:

<http://www.rockandice.com/video-gallery/czech-trad-ethics-knots-for-protection.>

<https://elllocesaqui.wordpress.com/2011/08/01/no-nuts-climb-with-knots/>



14. Equalizing points using the rope.

## 8. **Safety tips:**

Learn from an experienced climber but be analytical. A lot of older experienced climbers learned to climb on the basis that the leader does not fall. They can be quite slack about their safety. Having said that, considering they have climbed for many years without being killed they are probably OK.

Climb at or close to your sport grade ideally 20 and above. You are climbing with the wrong mind-set or with people that are too conservative or not bold enough if can climb 23 sport but only leading 17 or 18 on trad. Easy trad is very dangerous for the inexperienced climber and even for experienced climbers as the ground is usually not very steep. Experienced climbers tend to run it out on easier climbing which in my case resulted in the only injury I have ever sustained in a fall other than a rope burn. This was when a hold broke on a grade 16 climb after 42 years.



## 9. **Knots for trad:**

<http://www.climbingtechniques.org/knots-for-trad.html>

- European death knot
- Figure of 8
- Prussic
- Klemheist

- Munter hitch. For belaying and abseiling and the auto-locking munter



## Munter Magic

CAROLINE GEORGE · JUN 15, 2012

179  
SHARES



- Bow line
- Mule knot or hitch knots
- Overhand knots

### 10. **Sport vs Trad techniques:**

All climbing has similarities but trad does have fundamental differences. It has more dimensions and placing safe protection is inherent in the climbing procedure compared to fast clipping a bolt.

Bolted routes depend on judicious placement of a bolt that allows for momentary release of one hand gripping the rock and clipping of usually a single rope on mostly overhanging rock.

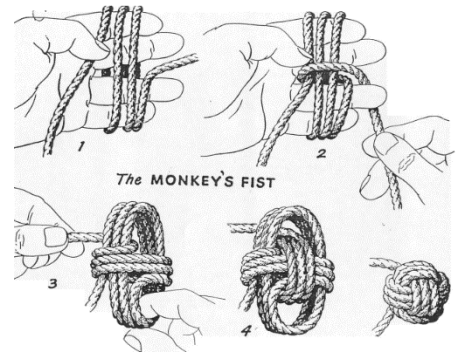
Trad climbing requires judicious planning of gear placements before even starting a pitch and if the belay ledge allows for it one can inspect the placements from below before setting off. Multiple pitch climbing at YW mandates that you always clip your rope through the highest point of the belay unless of course it is not very secure. This prevents a fall factor 2.

Your body positioning in trad climbing to place gear while holding on with one hand to do so is different to sport climbing. You also have a rack to carry up. You may have to perform a whole sequence of tricky moves to place a piece of gear in a crack that is not where you are actually going to climb the next section. You need to consider how this will affect the second that follows.

Techniques of trad climbing include:

- Walking a cam up with you if a crack maintains its width for several metres or leap frogging cams.
- You may need to lasso a spike with a sling above you and on a route called "Another Fuckn Time at Yellowwood a loop of rope is used to lasso a bollard a good 4m up from an undercut ledge.
- Occasionally some cunning chock stones have to be found and jammed into cracks and slung.

- Knotted rope can be used to fit into tapers when you do not have the correct size nut left over. (Hence another reason that you would carry a rope sling). Use a simple overhand knot = European death knot. Or a monkey's fist:
- I have hand tape wound around my nut pick to amongst other things tape mantle abrasions of the rope, but also to tape on a nut to the nut pick so that I can reach higher to place it.
- On occasion one needs to cross over depending on your balance and use your left hand to place a piece to the right of your right hand.
- Sometimes you have to forfeit an obviously good placement because it will use up a finger lock.
- You sometimes need to place a cam or a nut higher or lower than you would want so as not to interfere with a hand hold, finger lock or foot hold
- Bear in mind that large cams are generally less needed than small cams. Gold and Blue Camelots are hand jamb size and this allows for you to be relatively composed.
- We all have a natural inclination to put gear above us to effect a top rope at least for a move or two. This can result in problems as the gear and the rope can interfere with the moves. You sometimes have to re-consider this option, do the move and then reach down to place the gear after you have done the move if there is no good piece above you. The overhanging jamb crack on ***Fantastic Time*** is a good example of this.
- Harder climbing on trad all too often creates the dilemma of doing the move or placing the gear. The grading of the pitch, particularly on adventurous "remote" cliffs, must take this factor into consideration into the grading. So, although the red-point grade of many of the Yellowwood Amphitheatre pitches are only considered to be say 24, the **route grade is say 25 or even 26**. The grade will also depend on the amount of beta you publish. For example, the second pitch of Prime Time Direct is really only grade 24 if it were a single pitch on TM. However, it is bold and requires the placement of 2 tiny cams at the first crux and then there is another tiny not obvious RP placement a metre or two higher that is "nice-to-have" but very pumpy to place. Without this knowledge, the on-sight grade is solid 25 or 26. Later on the pitch there is another steep crux but in this instance the gear is easy to place but the climbing is hard. This pitch has only received one on-sight but some really good climbers have failed on it.



## 11. ESCAPING OFF ROUTES: FUN and UNFUN ABSEILING.

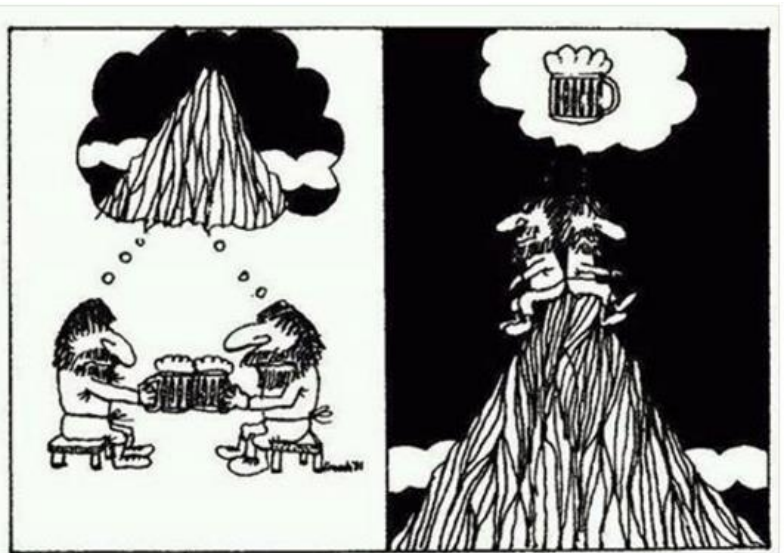
You never going to have fun climbing if you do not have the odd epic. Screamer falls, pulled gear, lost in the dark, freezing cold, dehydration, and so on. You just don't want it to be worse than that though.

So, you have to aim to be adventurous and bold and optimistic. You also have to keep calm and keep your cool at all times. Climbing can seriously stress relationships so if things hot up take 5 or

even 10 minutes to sit down, have a snack, sip some water. Start some inane chatter like the cold beer you anticipate.

Comment on the view. Discuss something interesting that happened on the way up. Then weigh up your options. If your partner appears to be wobbling and wasting time then as gently and diplomatically as possible take over proceedings. Alternatively consider bailing but this is often worse.

To prevent serious epics make yourself familiar with setting up escape anchors. This requires awareness and anticipation every step of the way as you climb the route. Even very experienced climbers have had major epics at Yellowwood.



Consider the fact that you have two ropes with you. If they are 50m long then you can escape from a route that is 100m long by tying them together if necessary. That is often as much as 4 pitches. But it does mean you lose your ropes. If you leave your ropes to come back another time, make sure that you tie the end of the rope down tight so as to avoid it being damaged or lost by being blown around by the wind.

As you climb or belay on the way up consider the terrain around you with regard to potential lower-offs such as spikes and threads and bomber nut placements. Steep routes are generally much easier to get off from unless they are very over-hanging but even then directionals under the overhangs can and must be placed.

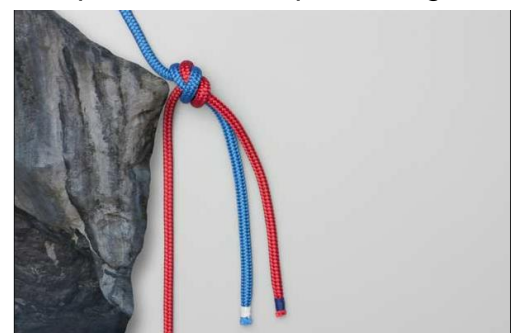
Most epic escape anchors are over engineered. A bomber nut or thread is just that. Get used to it. You do not need two points. If your NBF wants more than one piece send him or her first but this could be problematic if he she is inexperienced with regard to finding the next point. So, use your judgement as it is probably your gear that is being sacrificed.

Try and find an anchor that is at waist height or higher as this makes starting the abseil easier and therefore quicker. Use your rope slings with or without the lever biner depending on what degree of friction you may incur as you abseil down.

Smooth bollards sometimes work by merely putting the rope around them. Long abseils or overhanging abseils may result in too much friction so be careful.

Place the nut or thread with a back-up for the first person down. Make sure that the back-up is not equalized to the main point and just a back-up. First person down must stress the point as much as possible and take the full rack and slings. If there is any question as to its strength, then the first person down can place a few pieces of gear on the descent and clip one or both ropes through the pieces and tie off the rope at the next stance or stay tied to the rope. That means that if the top piece fails you may take a longish fall but at least not fall all the way off the climb.

Use a simple over hand knot (flat overhand bend or European death knot) to tie the ropes together. Make sure that the knot is properly dressed or shaped and pull each of the 4 strands coming from the knot as tight as possible. Do





not make a back-up knot. Do not leave tails longer than 15 -20cm. Do not use a Fig 8 flat knot which is less safe.

Once you in abseil mode make sure you and your partner each have a correctly made PAS (personal anchor system) with a 60cm sling girth hitched to you harness with your belay device on one locking biner and your spare screw gate attached to an extension to it by using a quick draw or doubled or tripled sling. You then have two options to connect to the anchors, a shorter and longer option.



Once the ropes are hanging down connect your prussic to the rope and attach it to your harness belay loop with a biner or to a leg loop.

You can use a locking biner but not essential as the prussic is merely a secondary system to your abseil device. 2 opposing biners serve as a locking system too. Pull up the ropes about 30cm and take the weight off by sliding the prussic down and allowing it to bite.



Then attach your belay device attached to the shorter option of your PAS to the rope above the prussic.

Once ready to abseil disconnect the longer option and clip that biner above your abseil device to the rope you will need to pull down. If you are in a hanging belay or even when not it is always safer to tension or weight your PAS.

**If it is very windy lower the first person down using the main abseil anchor as a pulley.**

Another option to get the rope to go where you want it to go and especially if the abseil is very steep is to weight the rope. You can even tie a rock on the very end with a simple knot that can loosen easily but this is not an option if there are climbers or other people below you.

In uncertain terrain and if windy do not put knots in the rope. Use a prussic that you have practised many times and that works 100%. If the abseil ends close to the end of the rope then as you get near the end, let the prussic bite, pull up the ends and tie knots separately.

If you do not trust your prussic you can coil the ropes round your thigh two or three times to lock it.

Knots are dangerous as the rope may twist as you abseil and cause a major problem over the length of the rope. If you want to tie knots then tie a knot in each rope separately.

Knots can also catch in cracks and constrictions if wind blows them to the side.

An option to prevent abseiling of the end of the rope in wind is to tie off the ropes for the first person down and tie a knot only on the rope that you are going to pull down. That halves your risk of a knot catching.

A final option is to coil the rope around your neck and as you abseil uncoil the rope as needed but that is often slow and results in a clutter.



If you abseil into space you will not be able to swing in to the wall if you lose contact with it. You can risk creating a swing by kicking against the wall if it is gently overhanging but if you go over a largish overhang and lose contact you are in trouble. Make sure you have enough slings or rope to prussic. Remember your chalk bag belt which is 6 or 7mm rope. Shoe laces can also be used.

You can create a marginal amount of swinging by throwing something away from yourself but still attached to it like a heavy rack or ruck-sack. However, you will be lucky to create a side way's swinging movement of one metre or so. Your best option is to sit on the prussic and using the remaining ends of the rope try and snag something on the cliff face which is away from you and pull yourself in. If that fails prussic up.

How do you cut a rope with no knife? Use a rock to crush it or find a sharp edge.

When you abseil make sure the ropes are hanging free so that they do not twist. Abseiling on a Munter hitch will always twist the rope so be aware especially if the angle is not steep enough to allow the rope to hang free and accommodate the twist. Two ropes can get very snarled.

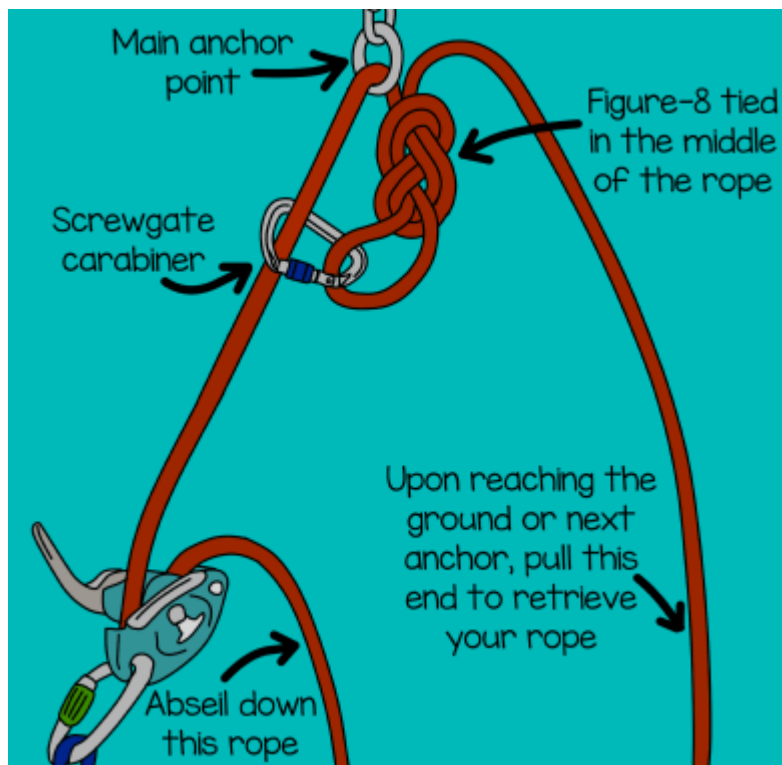
It is best especially if windy or if the terrain is not very steep and or irregular for the first person to always abseil with a locking device or prussic to allow the use of both hands to deal with a snagged or twisted rope. Be very careful if a rope has been snagged far to the side as sudden release could result in a dangerous pendulum. Place directional gear if necessary to counteract the swing.

A stuck rope can be a serious problem solving exercise. If both ropes are hanging down and the terrain is fairly easy then attach the ropes to your harness in guide mode and feed it through every few metres as you climb. This is quicker and safer than using a prussic or prussic. If the terrain is difficult then prussic of course makes more sense. I also always carry a Petzl T-bloc.

Inefficiency in abseiling could result in an epic or worse. In multipitch routes efficiencies can be markedly improved by applying the following protocols:

1. As soon as you finish an abseil if you are the first down or there are others to follow, if you can stand on balance at the next anchor, feed about a metre of rope through your device (and prussic) and announce **Rope Free**. This could save you an hour or more if there are 3 or more in your party. **Do this before clipping in!** You are safe and still on the rope.
2. While someone is busy abseiling below you apply your prussic and release at least one or even both of your PAS if you are on a safe enough ledge. It saves time! After the rope free call, immediately pull up the rope and allow the prussic to bite so you can easily apply your abseiling device.
3. If you are already finished an abseil, get a PAS ready for the next person down and clip them in as soon as they are close. While they are busy dealing with a hot belay device, take off their prussic if practical to do so.
4. If you are with a relatively inexperienced person apply their belay device to the rope on a PAS so you can be sure that they are correctly attached to the rope before you leave. Ensure that a knot cannot get stuck by checking the terrain before you leave. A prussic for that person is optional and not really necessary as you can control his/her descent by pulling down on the rope.
5. If you are 3 or more people with lots of abseils to do then things can be speeded up if some or all abseil on PAS extensions that are applied at the same time. That way the next person is ready to go as soon as the person abseiling unweights the rope.

## Abseiling with a Grigri or other single rope device



### Lap coiling.

Rope management is a very difficult thing to master and lap coiling especially so with double ropes. In a hanging stance, I prefer to tie off loops of rope on one side with the loops getting short and shorter leaving the first loop as long as possible and clipping them on to a single biner. So it means that as you pay the rope out you will sequentially release the ropes from the biner. If there is a lot of wind then you can hang loops on both sides of yourself. Another option that I have never used is to flake the rope into a ruck sack if it is large enough.

### Scrambling with trad gear.

If you are on steep loose terrain it is best to coil the rope alpine rather than butterfly style so that it does not drag on the ground behind and pull off rocks. Pack the gear into a rucksack or to a bandolier or sling so it also does not catch behind you.



Remember that to avoid a tangle and twists alpine coiled ropes must be flaked holding the rope in your hand and uncoiling it one loop at a time. Do not drop it on the ground.

### Useful references:

Although I do not agree with all the methods described on this website, a useful guide to trad climbing can be found here: <http://www.vdiffclimbing.com/>.

## PAPER COPY AND DIGITAL PDF ROUTE GUIDES

Compiling a route guide is a labour of love as anyone who has done so knows all too well. Many people prefer to have a nice glossy paper copy but as aesthetic and useful as this is there are many advantages to making digital copies of a route guide.

- A digital guide can be easily and frequently updated with additions, amendments and corrections.
- It is easily communicable
- It is environmentally friendly as it avoids costly use of paper (trees) although individual pages can be printed.
- It allows for high resolution photo topos that can be so detailed as to show the actual rock features that are as small as 10cm squared.
- It allows for an entire route guide to be stored on a smart phone that is easily transportable, small and light
- It allows the use of hyper-links within the document or to reference the internet through URL's.
- The digital guide has been compiled in A4 size and with large Arial 20 pt. size so that the photos and the text can be more easily viewed in the portrait or landscape layout on a smart phone without having to magnify the text. The best way to view the photo topos of the routes is in portrait mode.

The disadvantage of digital guides is it does not lend itself to being commercially viable as once down-loaded it is indeed so easy to transmit to others. In this regard, I kindly request that unless you have purchased a paper copy, anyone wishing to download or use this guide should please make a donation to the MCSA of their respective sections of R350.00 to be used for and in the interests of trad climbers and the preservation of access to the Du Toit's Kloof Mountains. I can assure the reader it is small change for the amount of time, effort and dedication it took to develop the climbs described and also to compile and maintain this guide.

The paper copy of the guide will be published once the digital guide has "matured" so to speak. By this I mean that over a 6 month or so period the digital guide can be used and comments, additions and corrections can be made. Thereafter the paper copy will hopefully be more accurate and complete.

The user-friendly standard for paper copies are A5 size and very small page margins of 1cm or so all round and that includes the gutter or centre-fold of the book. However, I have made the gutter margin larger so that one can more easily scan or photograph a page without losing any detail.

Thank you,

Snort Charles Edelstein June 2017

## HOW TO USE THE PDF DIGITAL GUIDE

1. Download the guide to your PC or smart phone.
2. Practise and familiarize yourself using the hyperlinks so as to easily navigate through the document and the route descriptions.
3. Print important pages if you are not familiar with the area. Important pages are designated with a watermark as "Print Friendly".
4. If you are unfamiliar with the area then ensure you have studied the lie of the land in advance on the photographs in the guide with particular regard to the descents.

# GRADING OF ROUTES

The first route that was established on Yellowwood amphitheatre was “**Time Warp**” and by and large it was graded G1 (19) with a bit of aid here and there. This “grade” belies the seriousness of the route and by any measure your competency level to complete this route requires the capability being comfortable with on-sighting grade 20 if not 21 on Table Mountain.

“**Armageddon Time**” is a complete sand bag at grade 23. I have on many occasions climbed routes that are graded much harder at Yellow Wood, Table Mountain, Magaliesberg and even Blouberg but found the crux pitch of “**Armageddon Time**” at my mental and physical limit when I first managed to on-sight it. Despite several attempts since then, I have repeatedly failed in “sending” it on lead or top-rope. I have nevertheless in the interim free climbed, albeit on top rope, the “Direct” pitch (26) and, then, on the same day failed to free climb the “23” pitch.

Grading routes at Yellowwood as elsewhere is a conundrum. At the time of publishing the first edition of this route guide, mid 2017, I can safely say that I have climbed more routes and done more climbing at Yellowwood and in the Du Tiots’ Kloof range than anyone else. What is more relevant is that I have also partnered more people on different routes in this area than anyone else in the past. So, I have a darn good feel what the grades should be on a comparable basis to routes in the area on the one hand, and to routes elsewhere of similar style and character.

So, despite the sandbag grades of “**Time Warp**” and “**Armageddon Time**” (which justifies a solid 24+ to on-sight) I have endeavoured to rather err on softer grades for the other routes in this area. To this end the crux pitch of “**Prime Time Direct**” has been upgraded to 25+ from 24 based on the committing and intimidating nature of the pitch. And I think that is fair and reasonable as it is overall at least as hard an on-sight as either pitch of “**Africa Arete**” 25 on Table Mountain or “**No Longer at Ease**”.<sup>25</sup> In fact, the first pitch has also been upgraded to 23 from 22.

To simplify matters, I have suggested an overall “competency” grade of the routes in both the British, European, American and the South African/Australian systems. What this means is that if you have the notion to on-sight a particular route then your overall ability must fall in the ball-park grade.

As an example, “**Armageddon Time**” requires at least the general competency to climb British grade E4, American grade 5.11c/d, European grade 7a and South African grade 24 to have a reasonably good chance of on-sighting the route. “**Prime Time**” requires a competency grade 1 notch higher, (E5, 5.12a, 7b 25) and the **Direct** another notch up. (E6, 5.12b, 7c 26). I must remind and emphasize the fact that there are no individual pitches of this grade on the route.

When it comes to the easier routes, the same principle applies. Rocking up at Yellowwood, photo topo in hand provides no guarantee that you will on-sight a route such as “**Divine Time**” that does not have a move harder than 19. “**Last Laugh**” on Table Mountain and even the crux move on “**Atlantic Crag**” is hard by comparison. However, unless you are experienced, fit and au fait with adventure climbing of this nature you will have your work cut out to on-sight this route. Good preparation to do so is if you have on-sighted or at least repeated “**Touch and Go**”, “**Magnetic Wall**” and say “**Farewell to Arms**” on table mountain during the preceding week or so. Then you should find it grade “19”.

The star grading of routes is mostly my subjectivity based on the criteria detailed in [The Near Perfect Trad Route](#). I have, of course, also directly solicited the opinion of the many partners that have shared climbing the routes with. My recommendation for climbing a particular route based on the star grading is as follows:

One (\*) star routes are not worth repeating. They are listed merely to steer climbers away from them so as to not repeat the unnecessary experience of thinking that they may be doing a first ascent.

Two (\*\*) star routes are also not worth repeating but the implication is that there would be one or more sections of reasonably good climbing on the route.

Three (\*\*\*) star routes are all worth doing and would depend on your level of experience, what you have already done at YW, what you are capable of climbing, what the weather conditions are like and so on. Over time this route guide will be edited to provide advice on which route and under which circumstances.

Four (\*\*\*\*) star routes are world class multi-pitch trad routes. They represent the very best climbing that Yellowwood has to offer.

Five (\*\*\*\*\*) star routes are just that. The best routes.

Six (\*\*\*\*\*) star route. There is only one. **Prime Time Direct** is, in my view, the best route at Yellowwood.

## HISTORY

### “SMALLBLAAR” 16

The route ascending the ridge supporting the west side of the amphitheatre is called Smalblaar (thin leaf.) Mike Mamacos, Bob Davies, Jannie Graaff and Frank Villa climbed this route 23 December 1953. Mike wrote that there: *“rises a ridge which has probably been looked on as a prospective route by most rock climbers who have passed this way, and who realize that ridges like that of the Klein Winterhoek do not sprout from every peak”*.

*“The ridge is indeed a knife-edge and a well-honed one at that”*.

On inspecting the ridge from behind the “gendarme” Mike writes:

*“The prospect (of climbing the ridge) looked so hopeless that we were all but unanimous that we should turn back while there was yet time and spend the rest of the day wallowing in the pools below”*.

It turned out that Smalblaar yielded fairly easily with *“the standard of rockwork having nowhere exceeded mild “F” ”*.

### “YELLOWWOOD CRACK”

J de V Graaf and R F Davies climbed this route in 1959 taking 7 hours from the road. De V Graaf described as a “D” grade climb with a grotty start. Hilton Davies constructed an abseil descent down the crack in 2014 and Snort (Charles Edelstein) constructed an abseil descent on the west facing wall on **“Tea Time” Buttress** that was named **“Zip Time”**.

Snort (C Edelstein) revisited Yellowwood crack in 2015 without the benefit of the original route description and armed with a rope and a few nuts and cams soloed the route. The first 60m avoided the grotty start described in De V Graaf route description by climbing the clean and easy ramp to the top to a ledge. Some tricky moves on steep dodgy rock (Grade 16 or F2) then attained the rib to the left of the crack and made for easy climbing to the top. The Abseil route constructed by Hilton Davies has since deteriorated and is not safe.

Solo climbing Yellowwood Crack is not recommended!

## **“BLACK WATERFALL FACE”**

This was the next major route to emanate from Yellowwood ravine in 1965 by K Fletcher and R Williams 1965.

## **“TIME WARP” 22**

Further development of routes on the amphitheatre remained in abeyance for some 24 years when Tony Dick and Dave Cheesmond returned to climb the classic route Time Warp in 1977.

This is indeed a serious undertaking that mostly follows the obvious line in the middle of the amphitheatre. It requires bold leading on dodgy rock with poor protection on at least 3 pitches. It is not for the faint hearted.

The name of the route relates to the notion by Tony that:

*“Moving back in time through the pitches, we knew that this route must have been climbed before. But it wasn’t. Surely Mike and “Boots were here? But they weren’t. Maybe we had beaten them to the route; they must be cursing themselves behind us! Were they really competitive in those days? Or is it these days? Timelessness is here on this old new route”.*

Perhaps Mike and “Boots” already knew what Tony and Dave only found out on the first ascent on pitch 11:

*“Climb the crack a bit more desperately (good nut runners)”*

I have climbed that pitch and the first part is true but did not notice the “good nut runners”. Pitch 12 is just as sketchy with poor rock to start and no pro for several metres with the only comfort the knowledge that you would fall directly on your partner if a hold broke.

Tony and I freed the pendulum pitch on the right in 2012 some 45 years after the first ascent. This was made less challenging by the fact that a was bolt placed by German climbers on the slab to the right on their route “Your Mother His Face” which joins Time Warp at this point. To my knowledge Time Warp has rarely succumbed to ascents in the last 20 years or so. I am aware that Richard Behne, Mike Scott, Hilton Davies and Bruce Daniel climbed the route over that period. There is some evidence that other climbers including Jonathan Fischer and others freed this pitch in the time past.

## **“RED FACED WATERFALL ROUTE”**

This route was the next new route climbed in 1981 by John Moss, Peter De Tolley and Mike Scott.

## **“ARMAGEDDON TIME” 23+**

There was again a dearth of development when Ross Suter, Jono Fisher and Gordon collectively and after several attempts climbed the classic and super hard Armageddon Time 24. (The grade is indeed harder than 23 by any measure and even more so in the context of Yellowwood amphitheatre. Ross’s account in the 1987 journal gives credence to the capricious weather conditions at Yellowwood. On their first attempt they camped at the base of the wall and did three pitches and rapped off in half-light.

*“The rain woke us the next morning early shattering our hopes as the weather deteriorated. The wind lashed violently on the flanking ridges. Already drenched we jugged up the fixed ropes to retrieve our gear. We then packed swiftly, and numbly began the downward slide to the road.”*

They returned 2 weeks later but the headwall off the halfway ledge thwarted them:

*“For the second time, nature had cast down the gauntlet, asserting its supremacy and demanding respect”*

They returned 3 months later and found a way off the half way ledge and climbed up a further 2 pitches but a rain storm swatted them off:

*“Bitterly cold and disillusioned, we made our way carefully in the dark and wet to the car below”.*

Ross and Gordon returned once more but Jonathan could not accompany them and they completed the route. Ross wrote:

*“Armageddon Time is a classic route in every respect”.* Time has validated this sentiment and 30 years on it is still a test piece for any trad climber to do. To this day it is very rarely climbed and even more rarely done on-sight. Most attempts even by experienced climbers are frustrated, if not by the technical difficulty, then by the elements. In a single day conditions can change from arctic cold to suffocating heat escalating the grade by at least one point for every 5 degrees below 15 C or above 25 C. And it is unpredictable even with modern weather forecasts.

## **“BLOOD IS SWEETER THAN HONEY” 22 and “THE SECOND COMING” 23**

Paul Schlotfeldt and Dave Shewell did the first ascent of the “Blood is Sweeter than Honey” 22 and Tony Dick and Dave Davies climbed a route they called “Second Coming” 23. These routes are rarely repeated and rarely on-sight flashed as they have complex and scary run-out sections that require a great degree of composure and skill to negotiate.

In the late eighties sport climbing took off and trad climbing, and more particularly new route climbing at Yellowwood and Du Toit's Kloof was eclipsed for more almost 2 decades. Any trad climber that could, climbed Armageddon Time and there were occasional ascents of Smalblaar, No More Bells, Time Warp and Blood is Sweeter than Honey.

## **“NO MORE BELLS”**

There is some dispute as to who first climbed this excellent route on the Chess Pieces. Suffice it to say that David Davies and Allen Ross climbed it in 1992 and wrote it up in the MCSA journal. It seems though that John Moss, Richard Smithers and Ed Harris climbed this line as long ago as the seventies.

## **“PRIME TIME” (2004)**

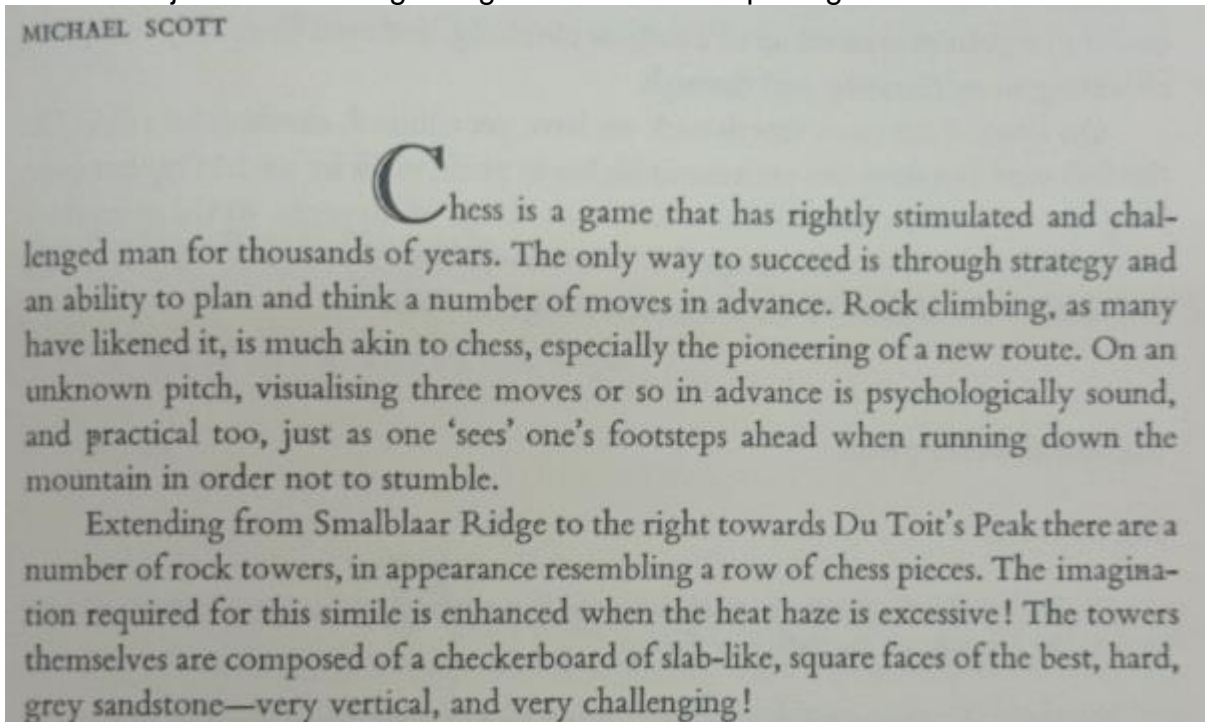
And then came Prime Time, the vision of Leo Rust and Lloyd Turner. (FA ascent 2004; FFA Leo Rust and Tony Dick 2004).

It is indeed a very sad chapter in Yellowwood history that Lloyd fell to his death in September 2006 soon after completing this masterpiece while hiking round past the gendarme in search of new adventures on the chess pieces. To the best of my knowledge this is the only recorded fatality in the Yellowwood “precinct” of climbing.

Prime Time and especially the Direct 25R (FA C Edelstein December 2008) is a route in a league of its own in the Western Cape and one of the finest routes of its kind anywhere in the world. It



is very steep, scary and varied and there is almost no easy climbing. Every pitch is a problem-solving exercise at the grade. It brings to mind the utterances of Mike Scott in his article in the 1966 journal regarding the opening ascent of **Castle**.



There is no fixed gear and no piton scars on Prime Time or the Direct.

It proudly rises smack bang in the middle of the amphitheatre.

Prime Time Direct is the route to do at Yellowwood. It is right up there with many of the harder multi-pitch trad classics at Blouberg.

### **NEWBORN 29 (2007)**

In the late 90's Sean Maasch started bolting a route in the left third of the Amphitheatre. He abandoned the project and some 10 years later in 2007 Jeremy Samson assisted by Jimbo Smith completed the project. It is considered to be one of the best modern multi-pitch sport routes in the country coming in at the challenging grade of 29. Nevertheless it is an anomaly at Yellowwood and inconsistent with the "trad" ethos of the place.

The bolting of this route caused much debate and controversy at the time and especially so after some sponsored German climbers came along in September 2009. Contrary to the prevailing ethic at the time, they went on a mission to establish new routes using what they called "**TraSchlaBo-style**". In an article that they published on The Climb.za website they wrote: "*In total we used 6 bolts on 9 pitches, because of our style, the TraSchlaBo-style (which means Trad-Piton-Bolt). At the belays, we always placed one bolt which was alongside a piton / cam or wire.*"

<http://www.climbing.co.za/2009/11/your-mothers-his-face/>

The Germans named their routes "**Fighting The Dark Side Of Gravity**" and "**Your Mother his Face**" (Sep 2009). The route "**Fighting The Dark Side Of Gravity**" finishes at the Halfway and Ledge weaves in and around those of Judgement Day. All the unnecessary bolts have been chopped by Hilton Davies and Bruce Daniel in the interim



Soon after these routes were opened, Joe Mohle and Charles Edelstein went to investigate and climbed the pitches of "Your Mother his Face" to the halfway ledge.

However, Edelstein and Mohle found that there were 13 bolts on the first 5 pitches and no less than 10 bolts at the stances up to the halfway ledge - a total of 23 bolts on the first half of the route. There were also 4 pitons of which one was loose. 3 bolts were adjacent to bomber gear placements.

<http://snort-charlesedelstein.blogspot.com/2010/02/this-is-what-happens-to-sponsorship.html>

Their modus operandi caused an uproar in the climbing community and especially so as they had not bothered to climb any of the existing routes. Much debate took place and Hilton Davies published a consensus code of ethics on Climb.za:

[http://www.climbing.co.za/wiki/Yellowwood\\_Amphitheatre#Ethics](http://www.climbing.co.za/wiki/Yellowwood_Amphitheatre#Ethics)

**"Your Mother His Face"** climbs to the halfway ledge and then from there, it climbs two pitches before joining **"Time Warp"**

No sooner had the Germans departed when a Spanish party in December 2009 did the first ascent of **Great White Shark** up the left side of the amphitheatre. This route has been climbed to the halfway ledge by C Edelstein and Gregory Thompson in 2016 who found several 8mm bolts in situ that are unnecessary.

## **"FUN TIME" 21**

In reaction to the Germans making bolted stances and using excessive fixed gear, Charles Edelstein, went with Tristan Firman, and Farrel Davids and did the first ascent of Fun Time. Like so many routes at Yellowwood, the route was improved over time to establish a classic climb that unlike its neighbours further right is of moderate grade and well protected.

## **"TEA TIME" 24**

Was done with by Charles Edelstein, Jonathon Hajos and Ilya Kohl ground up in a day in early 2011. It was the first attempt at venturing on to the east buttresses. Although there was some excellent climbing on it, the first pitch was chossy and the final pitches too easy to allow for the crafting of a very good route. Jonathan also dropped his climbing shoe just before following the 24 crux pitch. The route has not been repeated to date. (June 2017).

**"JUDGEMENT DAY" 25A1** (12 January 2012) and **"AFRICAN TIME" 25** (FFA: February 2012) and **"FANTASTIC TIME" 23** (FFA April 2012)

These three routes were developed respectively by Hilton Davies and friends, Johann Lanz and Robert Zipplies and Charles Edelstein and friends. They all took several attempts at different times over 2 or 3 years to complete and are classic Yellowwood test pieces. None of the routes have any fixed gear and all have at least severity 2 or 3 (S2 or S3) pitches.

The stories of the ascents can be read here.

<http://www.climbing.co.za/2012/01/judgment-day-a-gnarly-new-route-on-the-yellowwood-amphitheatre/>

<http://www.climbing.co.za/2011/02/fantastic-time-at-yellowwood/>

**"SHOW TIME" 25** was quite an undertaking and involved at least 6 attempts over four years to bag the first free ascent. The project started in March 2011 and the FFA was finally achieved in

2015 with Willem Le Roux. Since then it has had some modifications with Clinton Martinengo and Peter Robbins straightening the route above pitch 4 but this makes it much harder at grade 26 and does not necessarily make for better quality climbing. It is a pretty tough route and one of the most challenging on the main Amphitheatre.

## JABULANI

Jabulani was climbed in September 2010 by visiting Austrian climbers touted as “**Salewa athletes**”. As were the previous European visitors, they were sponsored climbers who gave scant regard to the prevailing ethic of bolt free climbing at Yellowwood and deemed it fit to create multiple fixed stances. Hilton Davies and company eliminated most of the bolts on the pitches to the half-way ledge. The route has not received a second ascent as at June 2017.

They published their route on Climb.co.za claiming the following: “***We do not know the history of the wall exactly, but we couldn’t find out any information about routes in that part of the wall and there were also no clues or traces of previous climbers found during the ascent***”.

Their statements and actions were at best disingenuous as there were several climbers, myself included, that were actively working on routes at Yellowwood and were publishing our actions on the Climb.co.za forums. The pitch starting from the halfway ledge had been climbed before as an easier alternative to the crux pitch of Armageddon Time. Furthermore the bolting debate at Yellowwood had raged on more than one Climb.co.za forum topics starting with Hilton Davies’ post in November 2009 and continuing till June 2010.

### Bad Things Happen When Good Men Do Nothing

Again, the “Bolt free ethic” of climbing routes at Yellowwood was thwarted by sponsored European climbers.

Since 2010 no further bolting has taken place on new or existing routes at Yellowwood.

## EAST BUTTRESS DEVELOPMENT

After **Tea Time, East Buttress** development was abandoned until 2014. Bad weather around Fitzroy, my planned destination in January 2014, resulted in me again casting a critical eye on the “**East Buttresses**”. What attracted me was the inverted triangular headwall high up on what is now coined “**Timerity Buttress**”. A host of world class routes have since been opened on the **East Buttresses** and there is still potential for more routes, variations of routes and link-ups. **Test of Time 24** is a major route comparable to the main wall routes in difficulty and length. **Timerity, Good Time, Extra Time, Fine Time, Leisure Time, Air Time, Time after Time** and even **Lekker Time** are all excellent routes with some of the best trad climbing to be found anywhere in the world. **Zeitgeist** came together at a mere grade 24/5 as recently as September 2017 and follows the very user friendly **Timerity abseil** descent route for some of the way and then deviates to push straight through the middle of the headwall.

There is work in progress in climbing what must be one of the finest roof cracks in the world.



**Garreth Bird working the Brotality roof. Sep 2017 Photo. C Edelstein**

#### **CHESS PIECES DEVELOPMENT.**

In tandem with the development of routes above Yellowwood ravine climbs were established on the so-called **Chess Pieces** that are the rock buttresses to the right (west) of **Smalblaar Ridge**. These buttresses feature some of the best rock in the area comparable to that of Krakadouw and Tafelberg in the Cederberg.

On November 5 1966, Mike Scott with his climbing partner Gabriel Athiros who was suffering from an near useless arm due to and anti-tetanus injection the day before, established **The Castle**. \*\*\*\* Mike in his article had this to say: *"On some of the most superb rock we have yet climbed, another three faces like this followed, boosting our excitement higher in pitch, pitch by pitch".*

F Fischer, Greg Mosely and A Killick did the first ascent of the **The Rook's Pawn** in 1967 that they gave a 3 star rating to. They described this route as *"Your next move. A Castle encore"*.

They then went on to climb the **Knight**. They described the route as *"A 'more' chimney piece."*

Both routes were free climbed at the moderate F grade.

Other than **No More Bells**, further development of the Chess pieces stalled until there was a resurgence of interest some **forty years later**. Since around 2010, a multitude of modern classic routes, some quite difficult with mid-twenties grade pitches, have been established by a number of climbers. The routes include **Fire Start** by Robert Zipplies and Malcolm Gowans and **Knight Rider** by Richard *Squeaks* Halsey and Anthony Hall in 2011.

# ETHICS:

The prevailing ethic for Yellowwood is **"Tread Lightly!"**.

**"Tread lightly" means** no bolting of belay stances unless all possible alternatives have been completely exhausted. No placing of bolts for running belays that are not absolutely essential. No use of pitons, unless necessary. No use of power drills is accepted!

Climbers are asked to respect the prevailing ethic which is intended to preserve the aesthetic appeal of Yellowwood as a world-class Trad climbing destination.

It is essential for first time visitors to climb at least one of the existing classic trad routes to appreciate the committing and adventurous nature of the climbing at Yellowwood. Older routes such as Armageddon Time (and the direct), Blood is Sweeter than Honey and Time Warp are all test pieces for their grade. Newer routes such as Prime Time (and the direct), Show Time and Fantastic Time as well as "routes in progress" of which there are at least 3, are no less demanding at the grade. Most, if not all the trad routes on the main wall have at least one "R" (run-out) pitch but none are "X" rated.



There has been much debate about Yellowwood and the most active Yellowwood climbers have talked extensively so as to settle the ethos of this high-value cliff. Yellowwood is a very special Trad climbing venue and there have been some mis-steps in route development at the crag. Newborn was bolted many years ago before locals had given much thought to bolting and ethics. It is a legacy that shall remain, but should not be seen as guidance for route development at Yellowwood. More recently four new routes have been established by visitors who have made extensive use of non-essential bolting. Whilst route development is encouraged, non-essential bolting is not; and these new routes are getting their non-essential bolts removed. They will remain as good adventurous routes.

## WHERE TO STAY

The best place to stay is actually in Cape Town if you are a local climber as the most efficient way of climbing at Yellowwood is with an Alpine Start that will depend on the time of the year. The trail is well marked and can be negotiated with head torches but familiarity will obviously save one time and trouble as regards finding the parking spot and then doing the hike up.

Du Kloof Lodge just a few kilometres distant offers various tiers of excellent accommodation from bunk beds to luxury apartments and the food and vibe is stellar

The Mountain Club Hut further west is also an option but I would still not rate it over doing a day trip or staying at the lodge that has bunk beds.

## SAFETY

There has been one incident of a break in to a vehicle and that was in March 2017. My climbing partners and I had removed some extra gear and stashed it way up the slope and hidden it well.



This gear was stolen and a window of the car smashed but nothing was stolen from the vehicle. There is no doubt that we were observed as we parked by someone who saw us stash the gear.

So, to prevent breakage and theft the following is recommended.

1. Leave as few vehicles as possible
2. Do not leave anything valuable in the car or boot (trunk).
3. Leave the note as explained above.
4. Lock the car and leave a window open to prevent breakage
5. Leave the cubbyhole open (glove box).
6. Leave a snack in case a vagrant comes along and is hungry. (I have come across one fellow before who I found in the car having left the window open and claiming he wanted food.

I think it unwise to leave a car overnight although there are many occasions that one is benighted on Yellowwood and your return to your vehicle may be late at night. Consider taking a bicycle and after dropping off your partner(s) drive your car to Du Kloof Lodge and discretely park it there. The just as discretely ride back to the start of the hike and hide the bicycle. This will add about an hour or so to your approach time.

There is no track record of anyone being attacked by wild life or insects at Yellowwood. Leopards are endemic to the area and are spotted from time to time. Read Johann Lanz' account of the first ascent of [African Time](#) in this regard. Baboons will bark at you and you may see scorpions and snakes. I have never had any insects bother me other than the odd fly. Theoretically there should be many puff adders but in all the years of climbing there I have only seen one tiny one all curled up and minding its own business at the start of the 4<sup>th</sup> pitch of ***Fantastic Time*** from the halfway ledge. We sat right next to it for ages and had lunch before noticing it.

The climbs are to all intents and purposes "remote" even though the N1 National Road winds through the valley below. The closest towns are miles away and there are no communities within 10km. So it is extremely unlikely that your personal safety is at risk or that there is a risk of any gear or equipment might be stolen. If indeed you forget or deliberately leave some gear behind or get a cam stuck on a route, you are very likely to find it where you left it on your return whether it be days or months later.

## WILD FIRES:

The Western Cape is notorious for wild fires that devastate our mountains and even our towns and cities every year from around January to May. At the time of this writing extensive fires have all but destroyed Knysna a coastal town some 300km away and it is mid-june. The Hawequas mountains are also frequently burned down and even this year there have been several fires that threatened the area and that destroyed the “outhouse” latrine at the MCSA Du Toit’s Kloof hut some 8 km west of Yellowwood ravine.

As mentioned already Yellowwood ravine forms a natural fire break but this does not guarantee that the fire cannot burn up and around it. Should a fire break out below you then you are unlikely to be at risk on the climbs as they are sparsely vegetated and your best bet is to climb to the cleanest rock. If you are at the base and the fire breaks out then I would recommend you head for base of the **Tea Time Buttress** and hang there above the clump of Yellowwoods.



*“Fire lily” above “Fun Time” March 2011*

The top of the amphitheatre can be very dangerous if there is a wild-fire up there and it would be unwise to try and out-run it. There are several options of escape depending on the strength and wind direction. If you are familiar with and near **Down Time** then quickly descending the first two abseils will allow for you to compose your-self on the long comfy ledge about 65m down. So you would be safe there even there is a fire on the Half Way Ledge.

If you are able to get to the **Timidity Abseil** the cave that stretches to the left will also be immune from fire in its rocky middle section. Any spread of the fire to the cave should be easily contained. Make sure you have harvested some green branches from bushes in the area to swat out any fire that may come your way.

## ASPECT AND WEATHER:(AKA how to climb a route at yellowwood)

The Main Yellowwood amphitheatre faces almost due North and is sunny for most of the day unless there is cloud. Depending on the time of the year the sun will start encroaching on the main wall around an hour before mid-day starting on the west side at Smalblaar and then eventually bathing the whole amphitheatre in bright sunlight till late afternoon.

Routes can be climbed all year round at Yellowwood but local climbers that are experienced at climbing at Yellowwood should be consulted as to what to climb in a given weather situation. One can have a very cold and unpleasant experience in mid-summer (December) if the ambient temperature is cold due to the South Easter Wind. Sunshine can then be both a blessing and a curse on the same day depending on the air temperature and wind speed. The coldest period to climb at Yellowwood is usually from July to December but very warm days are not uncommon.

In summer if the weather is forecast to be hot at Worcester (more than 30 degrees centigrade, start very early and avoid the east side routes on the main amphitheatre unless there is a strong South Easter wind forecast. If this is the case try and get to the halfway ledge before the sun gets to you and keep going up the next pitch of your route. The halfway ledge can be baking hot but higher up a pitch or two the South Easter will be cooling you.

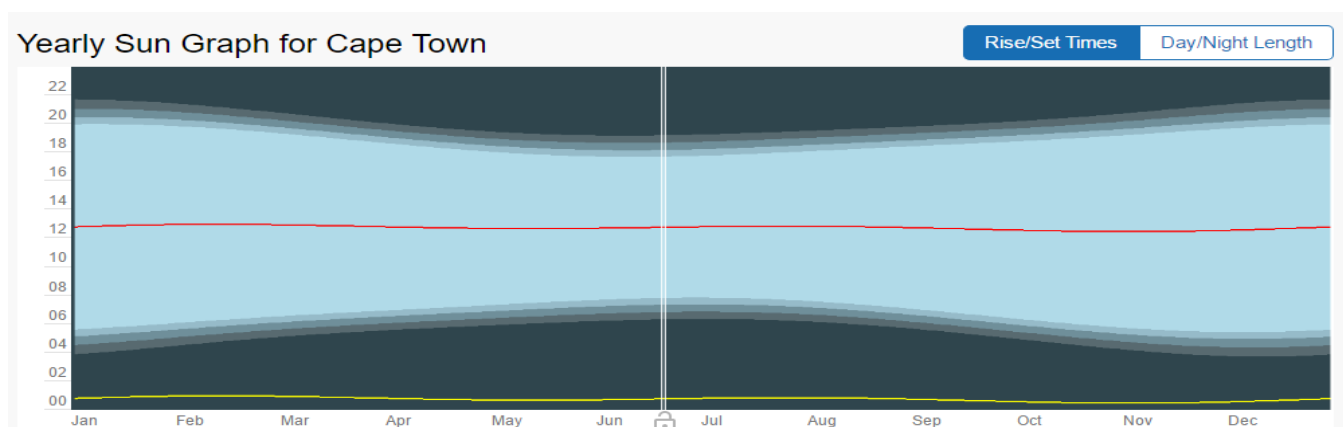
The corollary is that it on a cold day go climb in the sun on the amphitheatre.

The upper pitches of **Fantastic Time** gets shade later on in the afternoon which can be a god-send but this is never a reason to delay an early morning start on a hot day. **Fun Time** gets the sun later (30minutes or so) and is a relatively easy route and slightly shorter. The final pitch is also shaded by the corner as is second last 22 pitch of **Test of Time** in the later afternoon.

After heavy rain it takes at least 48 hours for most routes to dry. **Play Time** stays wet the longest of all the routes and the first pitch of **Fine Time** has wet holds most of the winter although they do not materially affect the difficulty of the climbing.

Most climbing trips to Yellowwood emanate from Cape Town early in the morning, sometimes as early as 02h00. This link provides appropriate information of the day-light available at different times of the year.

<https://www.timeanddate.com/sun/south-africa/cape-town>



As can be seen, in mid-summer there is 17 hours of day-light available and in mid-winter 12 hours. By leaving very early from Cape Town and walking at least the first hour in the dark one can make available some 20 hours of climbing time to do a route in summer and this is usually more than enough time to complete a route that is in your comfort grade.

There are various options of familiarizing yourself and improving your chance of success of doing an on-sight route at Yellowwood.

Option 1 is to entice a local climber familiar with the area and the climbs to accompany you. Contact can be made by posting a request on [www.Climb.co.za](http://www.Climb.co.za). This will often be successful and if not at least some very important weather beta can be garnered.

Option 2 is to consult with an experienced local climber and do one of the easier and shorter routes on the east buttresses, **Smalblaar** or **Chess Pieces**. This will familiarize you with the parking spot, walk up, the rest of the lie of the land and finally, and most importantly the descent.

Option 3 is to hike up and bivvy the night before. This is not recommended for several reasons.

1. You have to carry more gear and more water,
2. it is often very hot and tiring even late in the evening,
3. the bivvy is not exactly ideal and
4. it is difficult to get going in the morning if the temperature is cold which it can be even in summer.

Having said that the author (Snort) has bivvied up there several times).



# YELLOWWOOD FAUNA

Seeing a leopard at yellowwood is a thrilling event and they are indeed endemic in the region. They frequently pass the motion camera installed by Johann Lanz around 2012 and these and many other pictures are from that camera. One passes the tree visible in the first picture and this is very obviously a favourite with the critters who sharpen their nails on it. There are almost always fresh claw marks.



Dassies (Rock Hyrax) small rabbit like creatures linked to the Elephant are common as are baboons. Baboons are often heard barking but to date have kept their distance from climbers. Rock Hyrax make a loud shrieking sound when they perceive danger and a variety of the other sounds too. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2vP9ie2PSY0>



There are various mice and other rodents that love chewing on the plastic caps of water containers stashed around.

There are also the rare and very shy Grey Rhebuk bokies (deer) from which the shoes Reebok took its name

[http://www.krugerpark.co.za/africa\\_rhebuck.html](http://www.krugerpark.co.za/africa_rhebuck.html)



**Black Eagle**



**Rock Kestrel**

Pairs of Verreaux's (Black) Eagles that hunt the Dassies and the occasional Rooivalk Rock Kestrel with its distinctive sound can be seen and heard.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ym4ajG6W3QI>

Snakes are probably plentiful but I have only had occasion to see one small puff adder well-hidden and curled on the half way ledge at the start of the 19 pitch of ***Fantastic Time***.



Lizards abound too and Shongololos:



# YELLOWWOOD FLORA

Yellowwood Ravine is situated in the Hawequas mountain catchment area and is very much part of the Cape Floral Kingdom or Cape Floristic region. The dominant species of plants are, you guessed it, the “Real” Yellow Wood trees *Podocarpus Latifolius* that clutter the ravine and fortunately form by the evergreen drought resistance leaves a fire break of sorts. Classics sratchy fynbos, endemic to the area including slangbos, proteaceae, and Climber’s friend abound on each side of the Ravine and border the trail to the base of the amphitheatre. Many plants are aromatic

## Buchu (Agothosma Betulina)

The distinctive serated leaves and flowers of the Buchi plant



Climber’s friend *Cliffortia ruscifolia* is prolific on the walk-up and its spiky “tentacles” grab at your legs and arms on the hike. It sheds its tiny leaves that often cover handholds and nary a climber at Yellowwood or anywhere in the Western Cape will escape without many painful pricks of their needle sharp leaves when through the thickest of calluses.







**Slangbos (Snake Bush)**



**Restios**

Your clothes get infiltrated by the delicious "lemon grass" fragrance of this plant: ***Pelargonium Crispum*** (Crush some leaves in your hand and you will smell sweet lemon all day. And you make a "tea infusion" from the leaves of the "*Buchu*" plant

<http://www.plantzafrica.com/plantnop/pelargcrispum.htm>



This beautiful tree is almost exactly half way up the walk and marks the start of a short rocky scree. It is a treat to see it in bloom. It is called a ***Fan Aloe*** or ***Kaapse Kokerboom*** due to its resemblance to the ***Quiver Tree***.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aloe\\_plicatilis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aloe_plicatilis)







Unfortunately, there is also invasion of the area by ***Hakea*** which is prolific on the walk up to Masquerade. However, it has not taken over Yellowwood ravine yet.



## GETTING THERE:

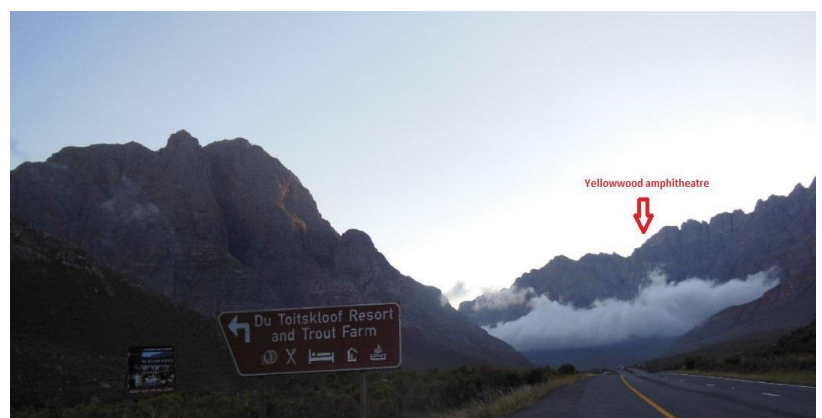
Yellowwood ravine is in the Du Toit's Kloof Valley about an hour's drive from Cape Town City Centre. It is easy to find as the Left Sloping Wall glowers forebodingly over the N1 Highway on its south side. It can be problematic to see the Amphitheatre if it is swathed in cloud but if this is the case your chance of completing a route is considerably diminished. Rather go and climb at Hellfire unless the weather report is clearly favourable.

1. [DRIVING DIRECTIONS](#)
2. **SAFETY**
3. **THE HIKE**

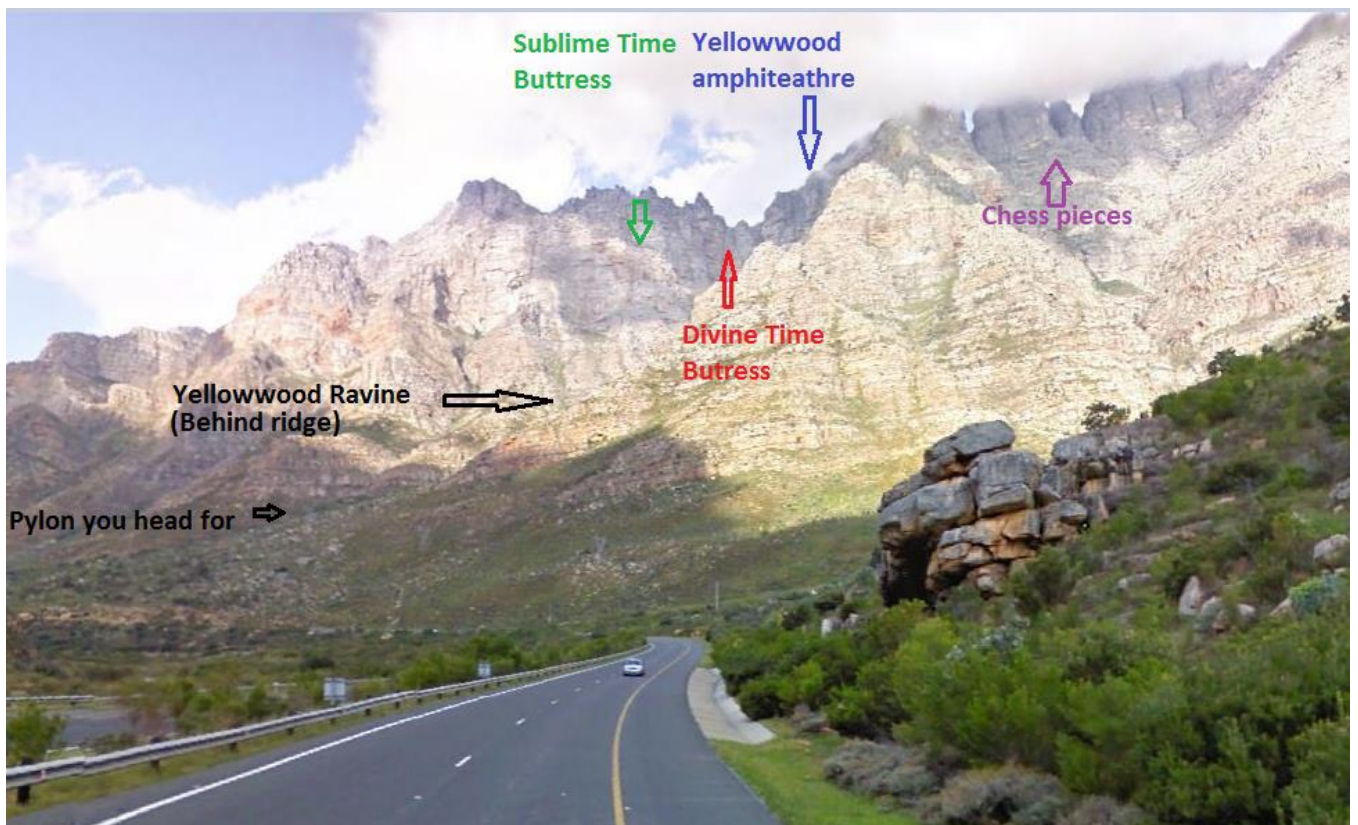
### DRIVING DIRECTIONS – 1 Hour

From Cape Town drive along the N1 towards Paarl and continue through the toll plaza and the Huguenot Tunnel. You will pass the Du Kloof Lodge on the left where you will pop in for a beer later on.

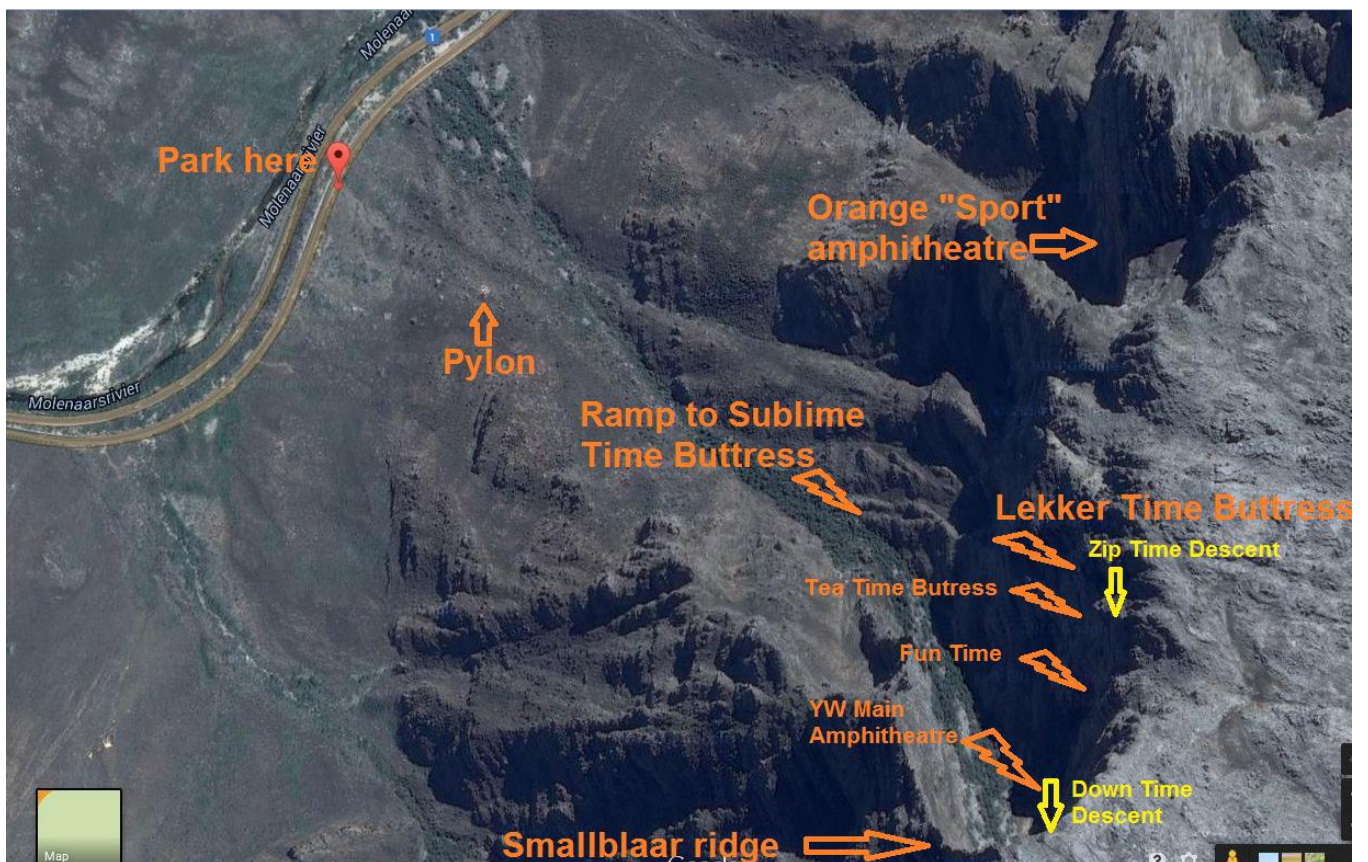
***Du Kloof Lodge sign.***







*After a minute or so you will see the chess pieces high up on the right.*



The first but less favourable option of parking is where the road sweeps left and just past the amphitheatre it curves back right and you will find a dirt track heading off left to the river below. There is parking space for 2 or 3 vehicles but do not obstruct the gate.



### ***Looking back towards Cape Town at the first (secondary) parking place***

From here cross the highway to the far (south side) and walk back about 500m. At first you will be on a concrete shoulder, then you will bypass the drainage channel of the Yellowwood ravine. You will again come to a concrete shoulder and after 50m see a gap in bushes guarded by a large stone cairn.



The better option is to continue till the highway becomes single carriage and carefully do a U turn and start driving back west to Cape Town for exactly 4.1km. When you get your first view of Yellowwood amphitheatre slow down. You will pass a large concrete culvert that drains Yellowwood ravine followed by a grass shoulder. You are within 50m of the parking spot when the shoulder becomes concrete.

GPS: -33.716732, 19.193647.

Pull off before the blue sign and stop just after it. Get your climbing mates out the car and have them direct you to reverse off the concrete shoulder into a small inlet camouflaged by shrubs. A large stone cairn marks the spot. Several cars can park here if they have some ground clearance. Pull completely off the road and of the shoulder too.



Up the slope about 200m away is a large electric pylon. Stop a few metres past the blue sign and reverse off the road and the shoulder onto the side of the road and thereby your vehicle will be less visible.

From time to time police and traffic officials find our vehicles and it causes consternation. So to pre-empt this I leave a note with my mobile phone number and that states the following:

***"To whom it may concern, I am exploring the ravine and the mountains with some friends. I shall be back soon."***

This intervention has resulted in two phone calls from the police where I have allayed their concerns.

## **THE HIKE**

With regard to Yellowwood ravine familiarize yourself with the main land marks as you hike up. In order these are as follows.

- The first electricity pylon
- The Tree growing out of the rock
- The donga
- The short 3m scramble
- The Franschoek aloe, the halfway point at the base of the rocky scree.

- The entrance to the Yellowwood forest
  - The Leopard camera
  - The exit from the forest on the right.
  - Small Time Crag
  - The final boulder scree
  - The named Buttresses
    1. Sublime Time
    2. Lekker Time
    3. Timerity
    4. Divine Time
    5. Tea Time
    6. Extra Time
    7. Fun Time
  - 
  - The start of Prime Time Direct at the centre of the Main Amphitheatre
  - Smalblaar
  - The Snotter Camp and Water drip
  - The Timerity Buttress and Abseil point
5. Once you have the cliff on which the route you intend to climb fully in view which is usually about two thirds of the way up the trail load the photo-topo and carefully identify and sync the features.
6. Then go do it.

Fire up the Google earth App on your PC or your smart phone and open this link that is zoomed in at the Du Kloof Lodge. Zoom out to see the trail 4km to the east.



YW Google Earth  
trail.kmz

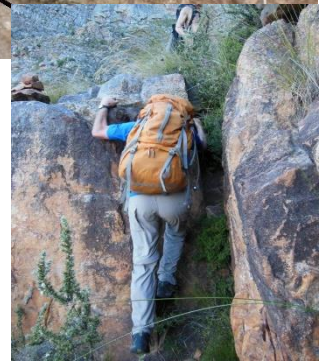
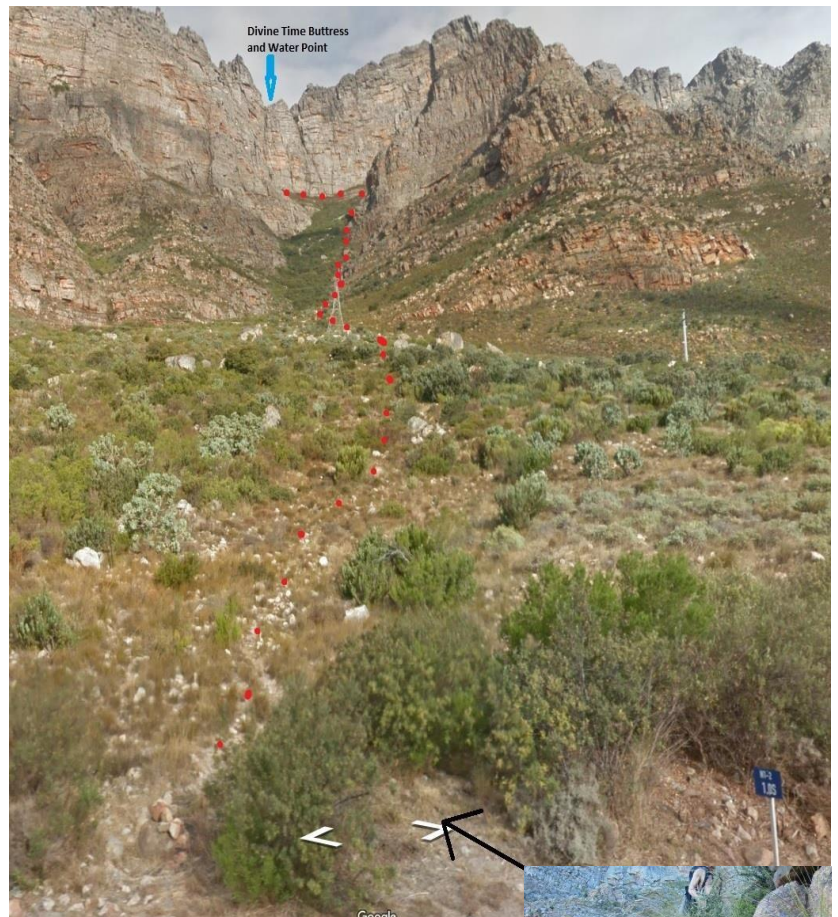


Follow the cairns to the pylon. Then keep a careful lookout for the trail which is well defined at the time of writing this guide and well-marked with stone cairns the whole way.

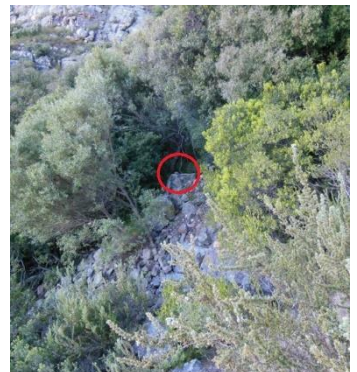


Landmarks include the following:

5 minutes or so after the pylon you will pass a tree growing out of a rock on the right.



Some 10 minutes later you will cross a small donga (gully) and then a little higher you will need to scramble up a short corner. After continuing a few metres higher you will see a cairn leading into the forest and to a lovely tea spot under the trees whence routes on the **Sublime Time Buttress** is accessed.



However the trail to the amphitheatre, buttresses and Chess Pieces turns up right here and continues to a boulder scree after a few minutes.

***This Franschoek aloe marks the halfway point (in time) of the hike up and is situated at the start of a short rocky scree. If it takes you 40 minutes to get here from the road then it will usually take another 40 minutes to the Base of the Wall.***

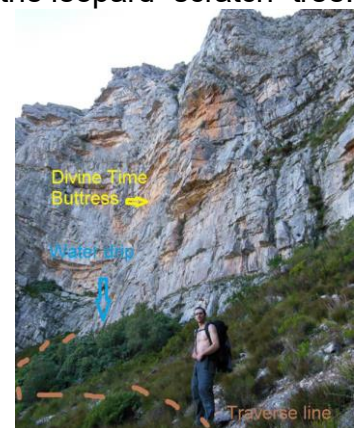




Continue up the scree for about 40m and then head diagonally up left through fynbos past some boulders to eventually enter the forest. From here the trail ducks in and out the forest on its right side – watch for cairns. You will pass the leopard camera and step over the leopard “scratch” tree.

The trail eventually exits out right into the open. This continues steeply for a short while but then you head left to a large boulder scree on the left that you enter between two small yellow woods.

Follow cairns horizontally leftwards over large boulders that then navigate through some yellow wood trees. Diagonal upwards to exit the scree and find a fairly high traverse line that moves horizontally left to the water drip at the base of the Divine Time Buttress.



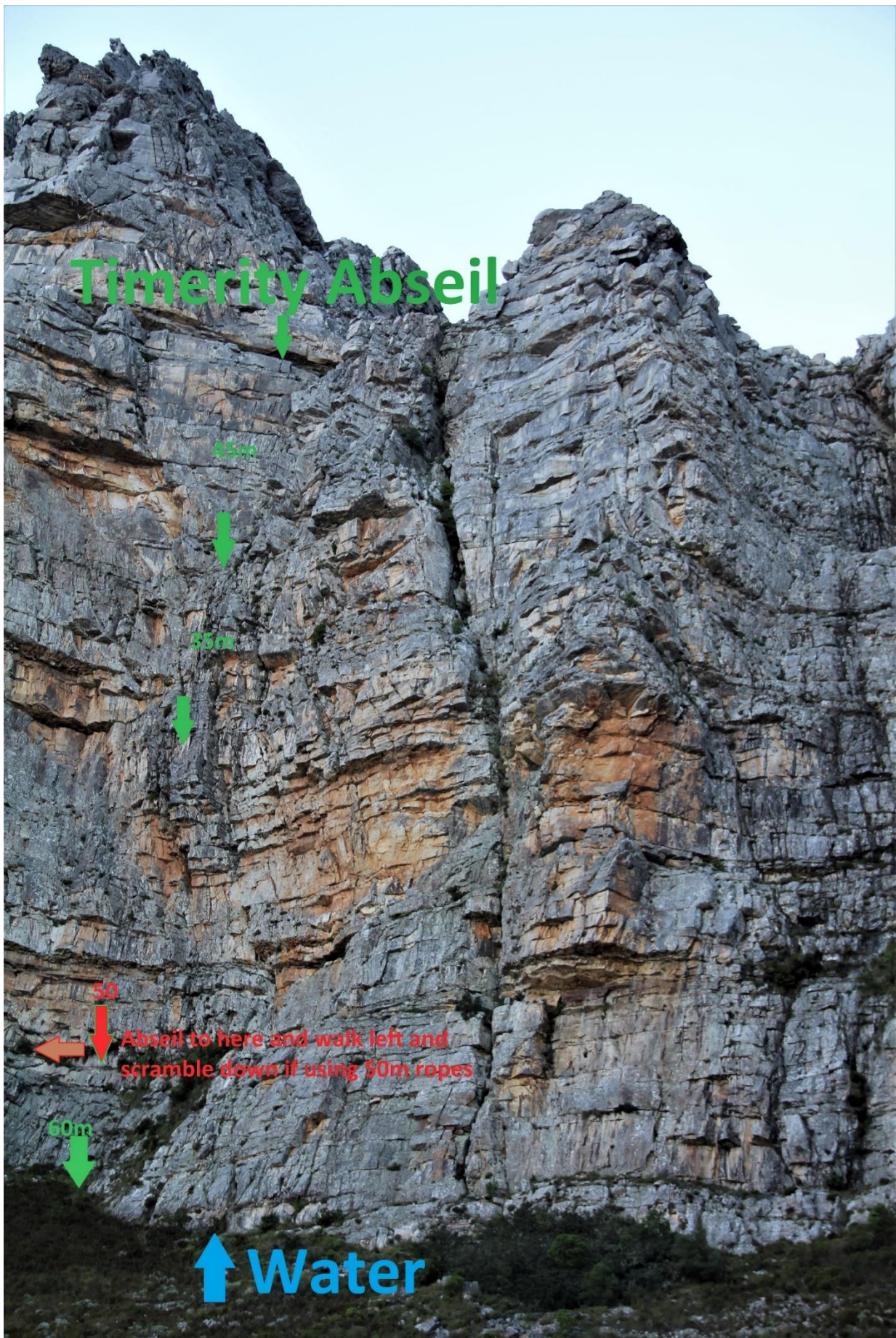
The **main amphitheatre routes** can be accessed directly by following cairns straight up the boulder scree that then ends around 100m below the base of the amphitheatre. Where it ends look right and you may see a water collection system that consists of plastic buckets. There may be containers filled with water in the grass on the left 2m before the collection system. Take what you need, clean the system if needed and otherwise leave the system as you found it or in better condition. Replenish any of the containers with clean water if feasible. Take down dirty containers

Find your way up to the base of the wall by continuing up diagonally to the left on a loose trail.



# DESCENTS

## TIMERITY" ABSEIL 140M





# TIMERITY" ABSEIL 140M.

The **Timerity Abseil point** is fairly easy to find if you orientate yourself before climbing a route. "**Terrific Time**," "**Lekker Time**" and "**Adventure Time**" top out near each other just to the left of the cave and ledge system with the first **Timerity Abseil point** being situated on the right of the ledge system where the cave ends.

"**Timerity**" and "**Another Fckn Time**" top out about 60m above the cave. From there fairly easy scrambling down a gully on the right (south-east) brings you to more scrambling down a ramp that eventually ends at the "**Timerity**" **Abseil Point** at the right side of the cave.

"**Terrific Time**" and "**Lekker Time**" top out at more or less the same place a short downward sloping stroll to the top "**Timerity Abseil Anchors**".

"**Lunch Time**" and "**Crunch Time**" end at the **Timerity abseil anchors**.

The "**Divine Time**" Buttress routes ("**Play Time**", "**Divine Time**", "**Time Lapse**", and "**Outrageous Time**" end less than 50m and just to the right at a slightly higher level than the **Timerity Abseil Point**.

"**Time after Time**", "**Good Time**" and "**Tea Time**" also end at a similar level to the "**Timerity Abseil**" and the approach is an easy but careful 5 minute walk along a traverse ledge.

The descent from the "**Extra Time**" buttress depends on what route you do and if you climb the additional 2 pitches (60m) above on the undercut buttress. So the approach to the **Timerity Abseil** is either horizontally for about 200m along the top of the "**Tea Time Buttress**" and then along the "**Divine Time Buttress**" or if you climbed the additional 2 pitches angle down east to descend past the Boulder complex indicated in the photograph and then down

**View looking east from the top of the Main Yellowwood Amphitheatre more or less level with the top of "Fun Time". Smallblaar top out is about 200m behind you at this point.**



If it is very windy with a significant up-draft, set up an anchor at the large boulders or at the bolted station and **lower the first person to the next point**. In so doing you will save time and the inconvenience of having your ropes blown away and getting stuck in cracks. An alternative is to weight the ropes with gear and then lower them. It is advisable for the first person down to use a prussic to allow for handling the ropes if they get snagged.

1. Abseil 45m. This descends the "plum" 22 pitch of **Timerity**. It is useful to have a middle point mark on your ropes. Look for a bolted anchor straight down under an overlap. It is level with a first large ledge system a few metres to the left.

2. Abseil about 35m or so to the next bolted point which is on the right of a black alcove and ledge system. There is a chain and tat to mark the spot but the anchors are marked by a short piece of red rope jammed in a shallow crack on the white face at chest height on the whitish wall at the right of the ledge.

3. Abseil to the ground if you have 60m ropes. 50m ropes require you to abseil to a ledge system and then traverse left about 30m and easily scramble down to **Snotter Camp**.

## DOWN TIME ABSEIL

The 'Down Time' Abseil descent is really worth experiencing. It is very exposed and exciting. However it is not the best way to get off the top of Yellowwood unless you are very familiar with it. The Timerity Abseil is far less complicated and faster.

Towards the right hand side of the upper amphitheatre is a massive open book with a grotty looking grey chimney crack system in the corner that ends in a gulley at the top. "Fantastic Time" ascends about 10m left of this system and tops out just left of the gulley. The "Down Time" anchors are on a ledge about 4m below the top about 40m left of the gulley. There is a cairn of Stones at the very top. Look down and search for the bolt anchors that are marked with a piece of blue rope as at May 2017. Scramble safely and easily to the anchor.

It is very useful for escaping from the Halfway Ledge and also if you need to bale off 'Fantastic Time' from whence it can be easily accessed from the top of the first 23 pitch. The top stance of this pitch ends on the same ledge as the anchors for the 3<sup>rd</sup> "Abseil of Down Time". Accessing the abseil anchors require careful roped traversing for about 30m to the left. (East).

Abseil 1: 40m. Straight down, past an overhang. Free-hanging for a bit. When you touch rock again place a cam and clip it to your ropes short. This will get you past the next bulge. The anchors are just beneath the bulge on a blank wall and hanging stance.

Abseil 2: 30m. Two bolts with nice long chains on them take you straight down to a good ledge. As at May 2017 a red rope connects the two points. Use it to pull yourself in. The next anchors are just to the left.

Abseil 3: 50m. 2 bolts equalized with tat and leaver biners. Bring your own extra tat and biners if you're nervous. Straight down to the jumbo halfway ledge. Scramble down 3m to the lower ledge to find the next anchors.

Abseil 4: 62m!!! You cannot get down this abseil with 50m ropes and it is better to go about 70m left and abseil down **Newborn**. SOME 60M ROPES MAY ALSO BE TOO SHORT especially if you tie your ends with long tails. If you are worried then use slings or tat to extend the point by 3 or 4metres or so for the first person to scout it out. The lower bolt has a single chain which is backed up by a maillon to the upper bolt. The maillon cannot be screwed closed. The abseil ends on a small ledge with two bolts

Abseil 5 and 6: 25m Abseil off two bolts equalized with maillons to a station consisting of an equalized hex and nut. Be careful how you thread the rope because it will get stuck if you cock it up. Some 60m ropes will get you to a single bolt to which is attached a short piece of sport rope.

Abseil 7: 10m. Either abseil off the single bolt or hand over hand down the fixed piece of rope and then scramble off to the right from the ledge.



## CHESS PIECES GULLEY

The chess pieces gulley is to the right of the Smalblaar ridge and left of the first Chess Piece. It is easy to find and the descent involves scrambling and several short abseils to the base of the Chess pieces. In rainy season water will flow down the gulley and can make the descent difficult and even hazardous after heavy rain.

Once down walk due north (towards the highway) on a vegetated large ledge system with Smalblaar ridge high up on your right. You will pass a grassy bivy cave and then continue along with the “gendarme” on your right. Be careful as the ledge system narrows especially in wet weather as this is where there was a fatality in inclement weather some years ago. (Lloyd Turner slipped and fell to his death at this point.)

Continue on to ridge by scrambling over boulders, around the corner and you will see the Main Yellowwood Amphitheatre in all its glory revealed to the East. Contour carefully on descending ledge systems to attain either the base of the wall to retrieve any gear left there or descend on somewhat easier ground to attain the boulder scree that leads to the descent trail.

## YELLOWWOOD WATER

Water is rarely a problem at Yellowwood as there is a source and collection system at the base of the ***Divine Time Buttress*** that provides water for at least 9 months of the year. A bucket water collection and storage system is maintained by local climbers. Always get local knowledge if visiting after December and before good rains start around May.

There are several water sources:

1. There is a delightful cool tea spot next to a stream on the approach to the Sublime Time Buttress. It is found after about 40 minutes' brisk walking on entering the forest just after doing the short 3m scramble up the right facing corner soon after crossing a small donga. There is a cairn or rather a rock marking the entrance to the forest. Follow cairns into the forest and then down a few metres. Squeeze past a tree and a boulder and then follow cairns ducking under trees for about 30m. If the stream is dry, continue following cairns upstream for about 25m and you will find a sort of cave with a large black barrel that should have water in it.
2. The second spot is about 100m from the base of the main amphitheatre wall on the right where the boulder scree ends. You will see a silver plastic container(s). There will usually be water in these until end December but will be dry until rains come again. Use your common sense to take the water you need, clean out the system if needed and leave it as or in better shape than you found it. There are usually containers, some full and some empty hidden on the left in the grass just before the collection system. If the water is clean, fill empty containers for the next party and place them behind the shady grass. If you find empty containers at the stash at the base of the wall then bring them down when you descend and fill them up too. Carry down dirty or broken containers.
3. The third collection system is at the base of ***Divine Time Buttress*** where there are several containers for collection. **This system is the most reliable.** Again, use common sense so as to preserve water. In the dry season, (January to May) ensure that as much water is stored in a bucket with a lid on or in water bottles.

4. There is water flowing as mini-waterfalls after good rains over several days from the **Tea Time Buttress** and also down the gully between **Smalblaar Ridge** and **The Castle**.

Please note that rats and rastuses love chewing the chewing the plastic bucket lids and water bottle caps. So try and make a plan to prevent them from doing so. Place full bottles in the collection containers if necessary.

## YELLOWWOOD CAMPING

Yellowwood amphitheatre does not lend itself to camping other than an overnight “bivvy”. There are few, not very comfortable sleeping spots and generally not enough water. The best place to hang-out is at the base of the middle of the wall just to the right of the start of Prime Time direct next a clump of Yellowwood trees which also provide some shade. There is no water there so one has to carry this up from one of the collection systems.

Fires have been made there from time to time on the big white boulder but are not recommended and great care must be taken in the dry months from December to June so as not to set the whole mountain alight.

There are also some more-or-less comfy spots further left (east) near the start of **Newborn**.

There really are no satisfactory sleeping spots at the base of Divine Time buttress adjacent to the water collection system but the base of the **Tea Time Buttress** has some level spots that can be made comfortable.

The best camping spot is way around to the right on the west side of the ridge supporting the **Genderme** and **Smalblaar** but it is about 40minutes walk and hardly worth using unless one is intending to climb on the **Chess Pieces**. There is a cave lined with a grassy floor and there is also water to be found there in the wet season to be found.



**Nick Edelstein age 10 at the “bivvy” Jan 2010**

If one intends to do a major route at Yellowwood one can walk up in the evening starting around 90 minutes before dark and then “bivvy” at the base of Prime Time Direct. Water can be collected from one of the water collection systems on the side and depending on how hot it is 3 -5l per person should be adequate to rehydrate and for the next day climbing. If you come down from a route dehydrated, you can always tank up at the water collection system on the way down.



## THE SNOTTER CAMP

Over time various individuals and parties have deemed it fit to stash gear, water and food at or near the base of the amphitheatre or the various buttresses so as to obviate the need to carry heavy packs to the base of the routes. Should they find them visitors are kindly requested to view these stashes as “private property” as is the whole of the ravine. Use of this gear without permission is considered theft by the owners. There is usually a stash of gear at the ***Divine Time*** water point and this may not be used without permission from the author. There are emergency supplies available there including some first aid stuff, cooking gear, some food and snacks and the like in the small yellow barrel with the red lid. Visitors are welcome to avail themselves of whatever they critically need but please inform the author (Snort) of any usage by sms and email and make plans to replace any stuff used. If you feel compelled to use any climbing gear then please first get permission and before using it take a photograph of the gear followed by a photograph later on as gear is frequently lost inadvertently. ANY gear damaged or lost needs to be replaced with similar brand and quality gear. So please do not use any gear that is not easily available in South Africa.

The small blue barrel is out of bounds and holds private gear

Anyone that does use the gear is required to donate R300.00 per annum to the Cape Town MCSA trad fund.

Yellowwood is to say the least a very adventurous place where accidents have and will continue to happen. Abusing any private property or the privilege of climbing there may result in considerable reluctance to assist any individual should they run into trouble.

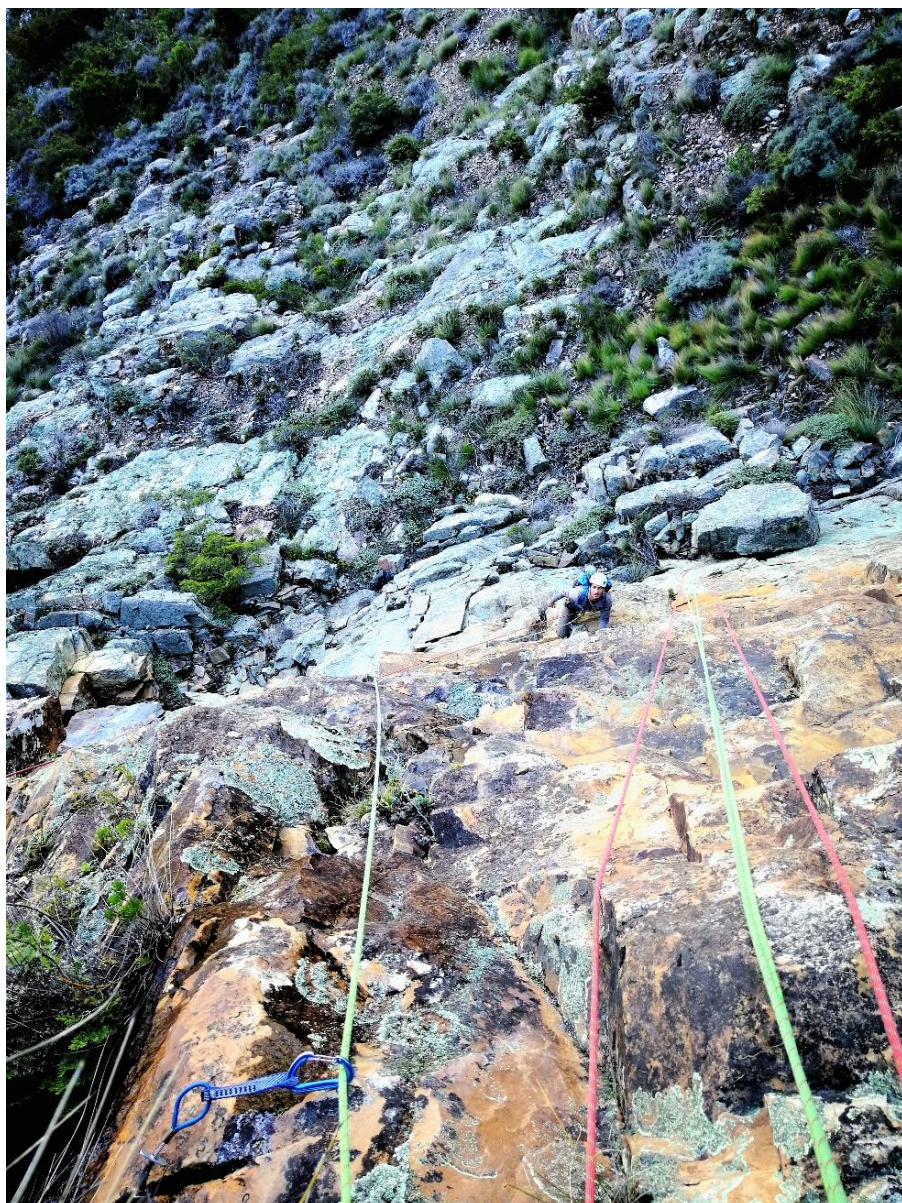


## HIGH TIME 23 240m \*\*\*\*\*

One of the most striking walls in all South Africa is the flat blank appearing west face one passes when walking up Yellowwood ravine. It is visible straight ahead when driving along the N1 from the toll tunnel. It appears so blank from afar as to be non-descript as a climbing destination and brings to mind one of those dreadful bolt guns to even consider climbing it. Its west facing aspect also results in it acquiring, in places, a lovely greenish furry coat of lichen and other vegetation that suggests that any attempt to contrive a route up there would necessitate the services of "**The Constant Gardiner**", my dear old friend Tini Versfeld. Over the last few years he has been gardening routes into climbing condition at the **Maverick Crag** and the **Africa Amphitheatre** face on **Table Mountain**. He is gotten so good at it that he contrived what is the best multi-pitch route on **Table Mountain** and indeed of the best in South Africa. He called it **Africa Safari**. His friends call it **The Constant Gardiner**.

But I digress. On Saturday 21 October 2017 I headed up to Yellowwood with my NBF Teodor Iliev. We are a on a roll having fashioned with Brent Russel two excellent new routes at Yellowwood. **Crunch Time** and **Terrific Time** over the last month or so. In 2014, with Bruce Daniel, we climbed a route called **Not the Best Time** to the left of this wall. This route started on the grey clean pillar buttressing the left of the **High Time** wall. The pitches on the pillar are of very good quality and the headed on into grotty scary rock that denied it anything more than a 2 star rating. To the left of this route is **Black Waterfall Face** a route of yester year. Further left of the waterfall, in places is clean looking rock that I thought might justify exploration.

**Teodor starting the first pitch.** Photo C Edelstein



On reaching the base of the grey pillar I cast a jaundiced and critical eye onto the massive blank expanse above and right and though it was **High Time** to give it a go even though the **Constant Gardiner** had not been solicited.

The start of the route was up a grey pillar and onto red dodgy looking rock. At least it was clean. Hand holds and foot holds were revealed but it was steep and pumpy and required lots of careful



checking for loose rocks, blocks and flakes. Crux layback moves up a short black left facing corner bothered me as I was not sure if the rock was sound. So, with a good excuse to weight the gear and de-pump I tested the pillar by reaching up high and banging it with my fist. It was good enough and launched myself up it. Some tricky climbing led me to a wet cul-de sac but a step down left and then up brought me to a hanging stance below the obvious off width crack line that I was heading for in the first place.

Teodor followed cleaning and gardening as he went. He then aided the overhanging off width crack cleaning off loose holds and the like to exit right of the tree at the top. He then went and made a hanging stance. I started off and promptly took a plummet when a lay back hold broke off. I started again and freed the pitch on top rope.

The next pitch involved a lay back move up a short right facing corner and then a step race on to the face. Tricky moves including kneeling at one stage brought to the base clean right facing corner topped with overhang. (This is where there is a bomber no 6 or 7 wild country rock makes for an abseil point.) At the overhang I moved right into a shallow recess and then continued up past a monster pyramidal block that made the next move feasible by standing on it. At last a comfy ledge up the right made for a sitting belay. Teodor followed doing a fine job of cleaning including trundling the monster rock. It made for a spectacular impact on the scree below dislodging and even larger boulder. By removing the block I wonder what grade that move is now.

Teodor set off up and left and climbed on markedly improved rock quality to a stance on steep moves. I then did the last pitch of the day that required a tricky move past a short overhang and then bombed straight up the grey wall, (avoiding the more inviting chocolate brown scoop on the right) on scary appearing but actually quite easy moves to a comfy stance on piled blocks. It was after 4 pm and it was time to bale to the bar as we were hot and dehydrated.

It seemed like we had done at least 3 rope lengths of climbing but one 50m abseil and another just over 40m got us to the ground. So far, the route has been extremely complex and engaging with no easy but also no very hard moves. There numerous climbing moves on each pitch hence the sense of the vertical height being climbed seemingly more than reality. Classic Yellowwood.

28 October, one week later, Brian Godfrey signed up for new best friend status and after a slightly earlier start we missioned up the wall again. This time I climbed the 1<sup>st</sup> pitch free and clean and confirmed the grade 22+. I also led the next pitch combining it with the third and we agreed that in context the pitch warranted grade 21.



***Snort starting the awkward 2<sup>nd</sup> pitch 21: Photo Stewart Middlemiss***

Brian then combined the next two pitches which makes for a really fine long grade 20 pitch.



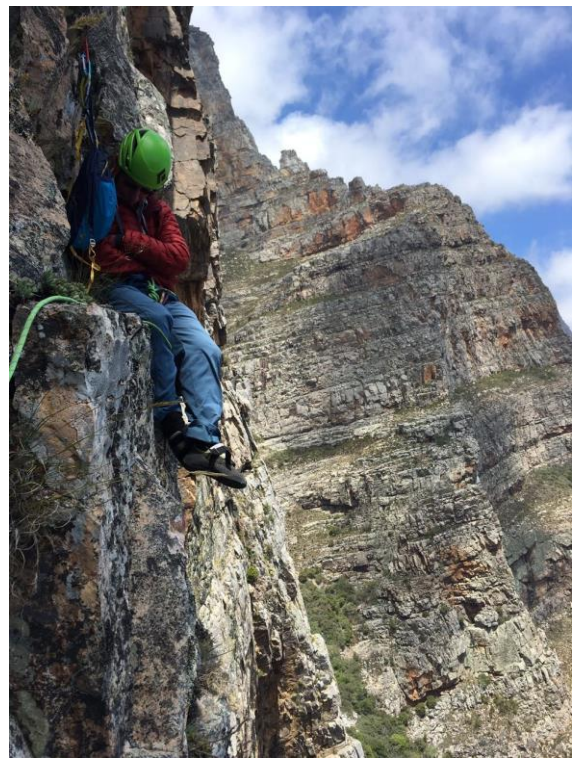


**Brian Godfrey on the stellar 3<sup>rd</sup> pitch:** Photo C Edelstein Oct 2017

Then the hard work started with the sun now baking us.

Pitch 4 involved climbing through a small overlap that was relatively easy but required extensive cleaning at the overlap. It then continued up a tricky shallow recess diagonally up to the right to stance just to the right of the large yellow overhang on blocks. The next pitch involved sneaking up under an overhang and cranking with difficulty through the gap at the left to attain easier ground. Problem solving moves followed and we got to the base of a short left facing corner where we called it a day and abseiled off a horn. 4 abseils of horns and threads got us down to the ground.

On Thursday 9 November ,with and OBF from Salt Lake City, Stewart Middlemiss and Teodor we furtively left home with an 03h30 start. It is onerous to repeat all the first pitches in a ground up first ascent just to add 2 more pitches before fatigue, the heat, dehydration r darkness forced us down. I was bent on completing the route. Stewart led the first pitch that with gear beta he grade 5.11b R which loosely converts to 23. I then did the 2<sup>nd</sup> pitch and Teodor the 3<sup>rd</sup>. We kept alternating the lead and I then freed the “difficult-to-read” 5<sup>th</sup> pitch and found it a lot easier than the first time, and in fact as a red point barely grade 22. Climbing conditions though were nothing less than perfect and it was still shady with a breeze and clouds cooling us from time to time. Stewart did it a different way and thought it was grade 23 which is probably fair as an on-sight.



***Snort feeling the effects of the 03h30 start. Photo . Teodor Illiev***

This then left the unfinished business to be done. Teodor stitched together a fantastic 19 pitch and Stewart followed this up with a stellar finish to the route that bombed straight through the overhangs above to end at a perfect abseil thread. Above was a lot of arbitrary rock cliffs and features that led to the very top about 2 or three pitches above.

As we were off the “**wall**” and on a vegetated “walk-off ledge” we decided that this would be a suitable point to end the route formally. It was about 5pm and any further ascent would make the route more of a mission than what it already was. Very few people have enough Yellowwood experience, or the climbing skills to complete a route of this nature on-sight in a day even in perfect conditions as we had. So, making it longer by climbing the easy piches above would be self-defeating in all sorts of ways. It would also require a more complex descent with abseils taking place over non-vertical rock with rope snags being a real possibility.

We were satisfied, and we were done.

5 clean abseils got us to the ground and we got to the car as it got dark.

A few minutes later Elias, the bar tender at Du Kloof Lodge put a cold Windhoek Lager in my hand. I don’t even have to request it anymore. He sees me coming,,,,,

## **APPROACH:**

Approach as for ***Sublime Time*** – about 90minutes and an early start in good coolish weather is Park at the usual spot, hike about 20 minutes, past the Pilon, the tree growing out of the rock, past the donga (gully) and after the short scramble up the orange right facing corner head into the forest and past the tea spot where you may find running water after winter rains. Head up the stream for about 30m and then follow cairns to exit the ravine on the left. Head up to the ridge to the left of the rock rib that is followed to ***Sublime Time***. Once on that rib go up a little way following cairns and then exit left into the gully. Follow cairns up the gully past low angle rock slabs that may be wet and slippery after rain. Once these peter out, exit left on to the next ridge and follow cairns to the base of the rout



## BETA:

This is a long route with plenty of problem solving moves and most parties, even if fairly skilled, will take 8-10 hours to complete on-sight. It will be a tough on-sight in mid-winter even in good weather but abseiling off with torches should not be problematic. September to May when the days are longer is recommended and a weather forecast of maximum temperatures of say no less than 20 degrees C or more than 30 degrees C for Worcester and preferably partly cloudy too would be ideal. Do not climb the route if there is a strong NW front with strong wind coming in as this might get your ropes stuck on the abseil.

In good conditions 1.5 litre water per person will suffice but otherwise 2 litres each.

If climbing in a party of two or even three, time and energy can be saved by hauling up water and snacks and warm jackets if needed on the pumpy first pitch as it is less than 30m long. Thereafter there is no merit in hauling gear.

As you climb, and conditions change you can leave extra water, jackets and the like at any of the stances after pitch 3 and retrieve same on the abseils.

Only pitch one is complex and pumpy to protect but it is safe enough for competent climbers.

**Pitch 1:** 25m 22+. Climb up the grey stacked blocks and then move left a few metres on red-brown rock to climb up below the right end of the overhang. Find a sneaky tiny cam placement in an "undercling" position to protect the move. At the overhang scuttle right 2m metres on the rail. Then straight up to the next rail. Place a high large nut and lay back up the short left facing corner to jugs. Climb up 3m to where it gets grotty and place a high cam or nut to protect the second. Step down left and then make standing stance at bomber nut 7 placement.

**Pitch 2** 45m 20. Climb up to the off-width crack and up it past the tree to a rail. Continue up to the next rail, move right and lay back up 2m up the short right facing corner. Then step right onto the face and head up to the large right facing corner topped by an overhang. Climb up the corner and then step right into the next recess. Continue up to the square overhang above and stance on the good sitting ledge on the right after placing a bomber small nut.

**Pitch 3** 50m 19. Step across the gap under the square overhang and climb past the left side of the long thin overhang above. Do tricky face moves to a good ledge. Climb up past a large scary but wedged flake and then up the intimidating grey white face to the left of dark brown recess to stance on blocks at a thread point in situ.

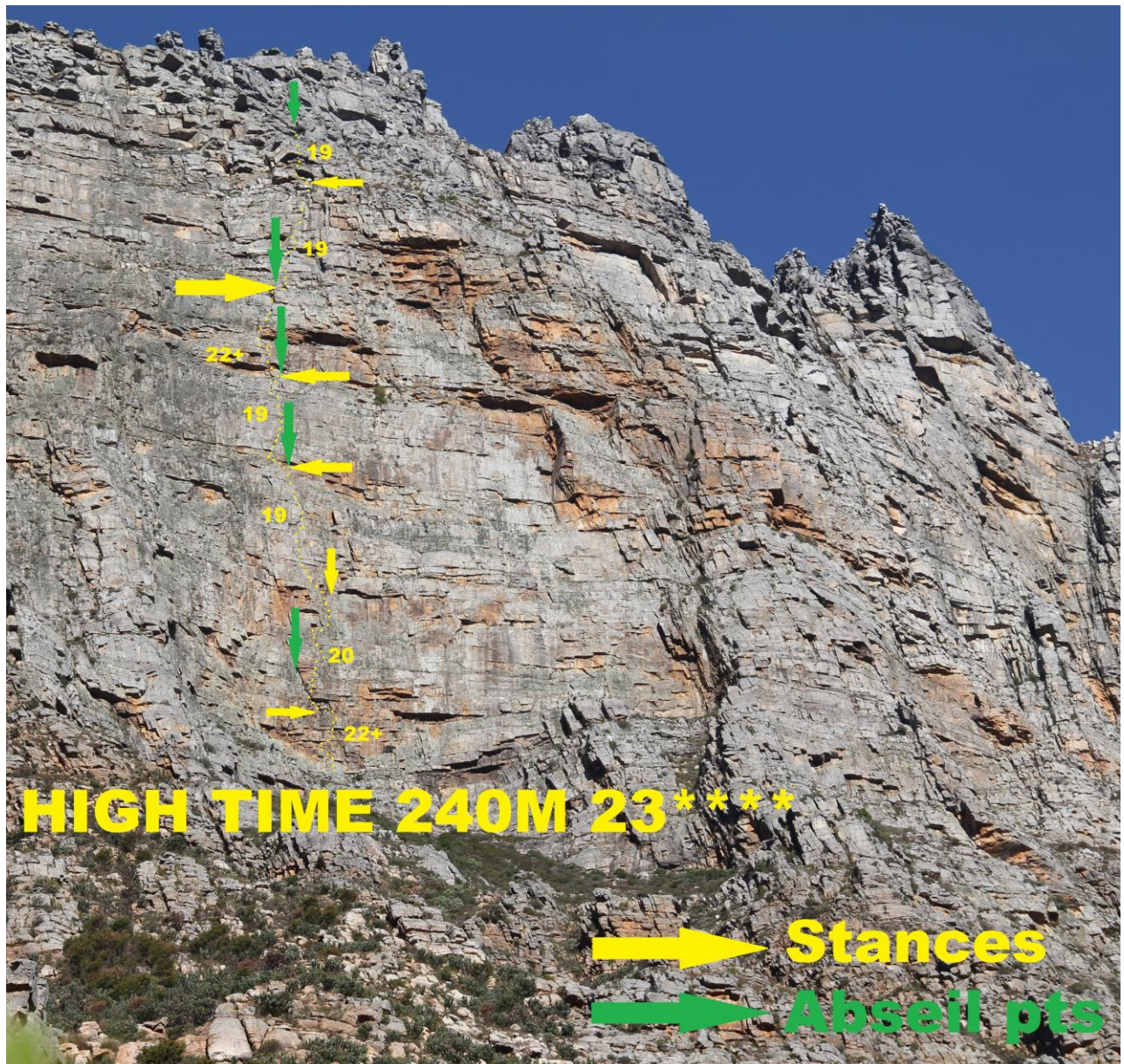
**Pitch 4.** 45m 19. Head up left and climb through the gap on good holds. Climb the right slanting recess crack to easier ground and up past the left side of a large pillar complex to stance on blocks just to the right of the large yellow overhang.

**Pitch 5,** 40m 22+. Climb up to the overhang and place two tiny cams in the very thin rail. Exit awkwardly out and up left (crux). Continue up tricky moves on the yellow face overhang and then step out left. Climb easily up rightwards to the left facing corner above and then on up to the next, larger left facing corner. Then, instead of climbing in the corner, make a move up to the right and finish up the arete. Stance on the large ledge.

**Pitch 6,** 35m 19. Avoid the smooth right facing dihedral and climb up the large lay-back flake to the right. Continue up to the bulging rib and lay back up the right side. Then step left and continue up the left side of the arete. Stance under the large overhang.

**Pitch 7.** 20m 19. Do a tricky move up left past the lip of the overhang. Then move right on a ledge and bomb straight through the overlap above to a thread belay.

**Pitch 8** etc. 100m or so. If you feel like topping out or wish to descend via the *Timerity Abseil* or some other way, then pick a line on the broken up cliffs above.



**Descent:** The descent is relatively save and uncomplicated an enjoys 5 abseils on threads or off a spike. There is a biner or mailon on each point. The route is very straight and you climb past all the threads on the ascent except the first (lowest one) one which is exactly 58m plumb-line below the 2<sup>nd</sup> point. It is very easy to find as it is in the left facing corner that is the continuation of the awkward off-width start to pitch 2.

**Gear.** No special gear is needed and like Yellowwood in general, the rock eats up small cams. Only the 2<sup>nd</sup> pitch necessitates any piece larger than 2 inches and a gold Camelot fits the bill perfectly as you enter the offwidth. So, all that is needed is a standard single set of nuts 1 to 10, (no RP's) 12-14 slings, and a double set of cams to 1.5inch, one 2inch (red Camelot), one 3 inch (yellow Camelot) and one 4 inch (blue Camelot). The climbing is very problem solving and the first pitch especially so. So to improve efficiency avoid tricky nut placements and bang in small cams in the bountiful placements.

60m ropes are needed for the abseils.

This route is straight enough to climb with a single rope but then take 2 extra slings and a tagline to abseil off.

**Belays.** All the belays are super safe. The first is protected by a variety of pieces but there is a bomber nut placement that fits from size 7 to 10 and a ¾ inch cam. The second stance is on a comfy ledge with small cam belay but there is a bomber nut 3 or 4 placement just as you exit right to the stance. Your leader can use this as the first anti-death runner as he/she sets off up pitch 3. Pitch 3 you can belay off the abseil anchor and same with pitch 4 and 5 but there are other easy options. Pitch six is on a ledge with lots of easy options and pitch 7 is also at the abseil point.

## **TERRIFIC TIME 23 225m \*\*\*\*\***

***Terrific Time*** is simply one of the best routes to do anywhere. It is well protected and on some of the best rock at Yellowwood. The climbing is interesting, technical and varied with hand jams aplenty, lay backs, heel hooks and rock-ons' and even a knee bar makes one move easier. All the tricky moves are safe with pro easy to place. All the stances are comfy.

The route is west facing so gets sun later than the main wall but can be cold as it was when we did the second ascent.



The tricky pitches can all be avoided by escaping on to **Lekker Time** which parallels it just to the right the whole way. This could be necessary for a variety of reason including advancing inclement weather or a very hot day.

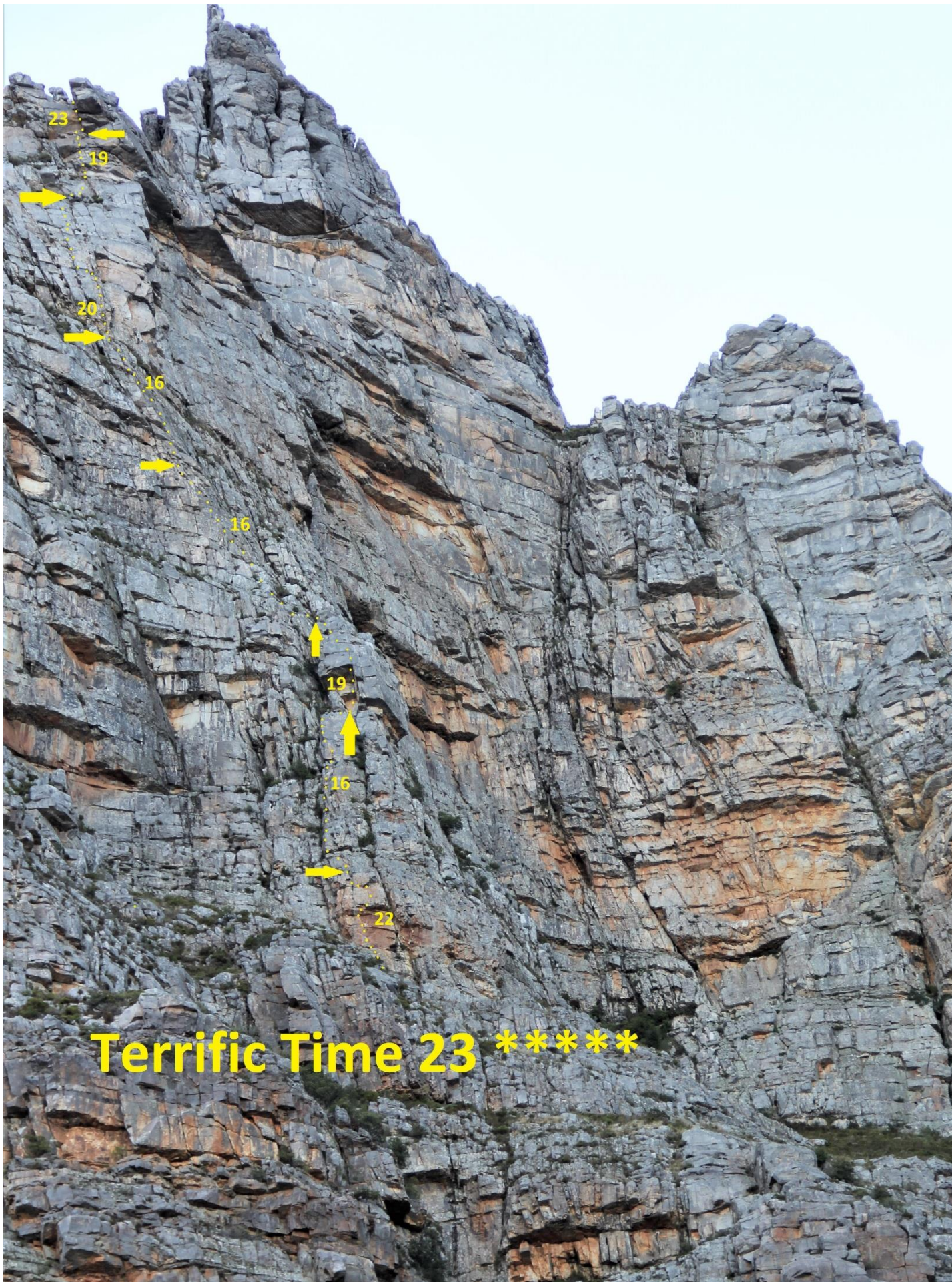
On the second ascent with an advancing storm, high wind and what amounted to arctic conditions, Teodor Iliev and I completed the whole route in 4 hours including cleaning and climbing the new final 23 overhang pitch. I climbed the whole route with a long sleeve tech top, down jacket and fleece balaclava. Moving fast was imperative to stay warm and we were down back at the **Snotter Camp** by 13h30 pm and home by 4pm.

***I personally rate this as the best route at Yellowwood at the grade as it so user friendly.*** And it is almost as long and certainly as hard as some the main amphitheatre routes but not nearly as intimidating and run-out as so many of those routes are.



***Snort starting off on the first pitch of Terrific Time. Photo Brent Russel***







**Start:** The route starts a few metres left of **Lekker Time**, 5 minutes from the **Snotter Camp**.

**Pitch 1:** 25m 21. Climb up the easy ramp. Crank onto the grey face and then head up the seam on the orange-red face to a thin rail below the overhang. Crank through to a juggy rail then crank strenuously out right on grey jugs to attain a balancy face. Move up and left to a ledge.

**Pitch 2:** 45m 16. Continue up the faces and flakes heading onto the arête on perfect rock to a ledge below the large overhangs. (Stance shared with "**Lekker Time**".

**Pitch 3:** 20m 19. Head up past the fixed cam to the roof rail with lay-backs and or hand jams. Rail right to the lip and continue up the face to the left of **Fun Time's** crack to belay on top of the large gendarme on the left. (Small cairn).

**Snort balancing on the face above the strenuous roof crank.** Photo Brent Russel



**Pitch 4:** 40m 16. Step across the gap and move left and follow corners and cracks upwards to belay on a ledge below and slightly down from a distinctive square orange rock scar.

**Pitch 5:** 25m 16. Climb past the rock scar 2-3m to the right and continue diagonally left on excellent rock and good holds to stance on a large ledge shared with **Lekker Time**.

**Pitch 6:** 50m 20. Climb up the mottled black the recess on dodgy looking flakes but excellent pro just left of **Lekker Time**. Once the angle eases step left 3m and climb the grey panels of rock parallel to **Lekker Time**.

**Pitch 7:** 20m 19. Pull up onto the slab and head towards a slot in the overlap, just to the left of **Lekker Time's** crux. Pull up into the slot and then up to the next slot. Then head up to the roof to the semi hanging stance under the overhang where shade on a hot day may be welcome.

**Pitch 8:** 15m. 23. Crank strenuously through the overhang on good pro and then easily up to the stance. (You can also easily escape to the right if the crack through the roof seems a little daunting.

**Descent:** Walk along the ledge system in a south-westerly direction for about 100m to the **Timidity Abseil**.

**FA:** Charles Edelstein and Brent Russell September 2017 excl. pitch 8. Pitch 8. C Edelstein and Teodor Iliev 15 Oct 2017 (needs a free on-sight ascent as I weighted the gear to clean the pitch.)





***Brent Russel clinging on to the balance face of Pitch 1. Photo C Edelstein***



***Snort following pitch 2 on Terrific Time. Photo Brent Russel.***





***Snort following pitch 2 on Terrific Time. Photo Brent Russel.***





***Teodor Iliev leading pitch 3 on Terrific Time. Photo C Edelstein***





**Brent leading pitch 4 toward the square orange rock patch. Photo Charles Edelstein**



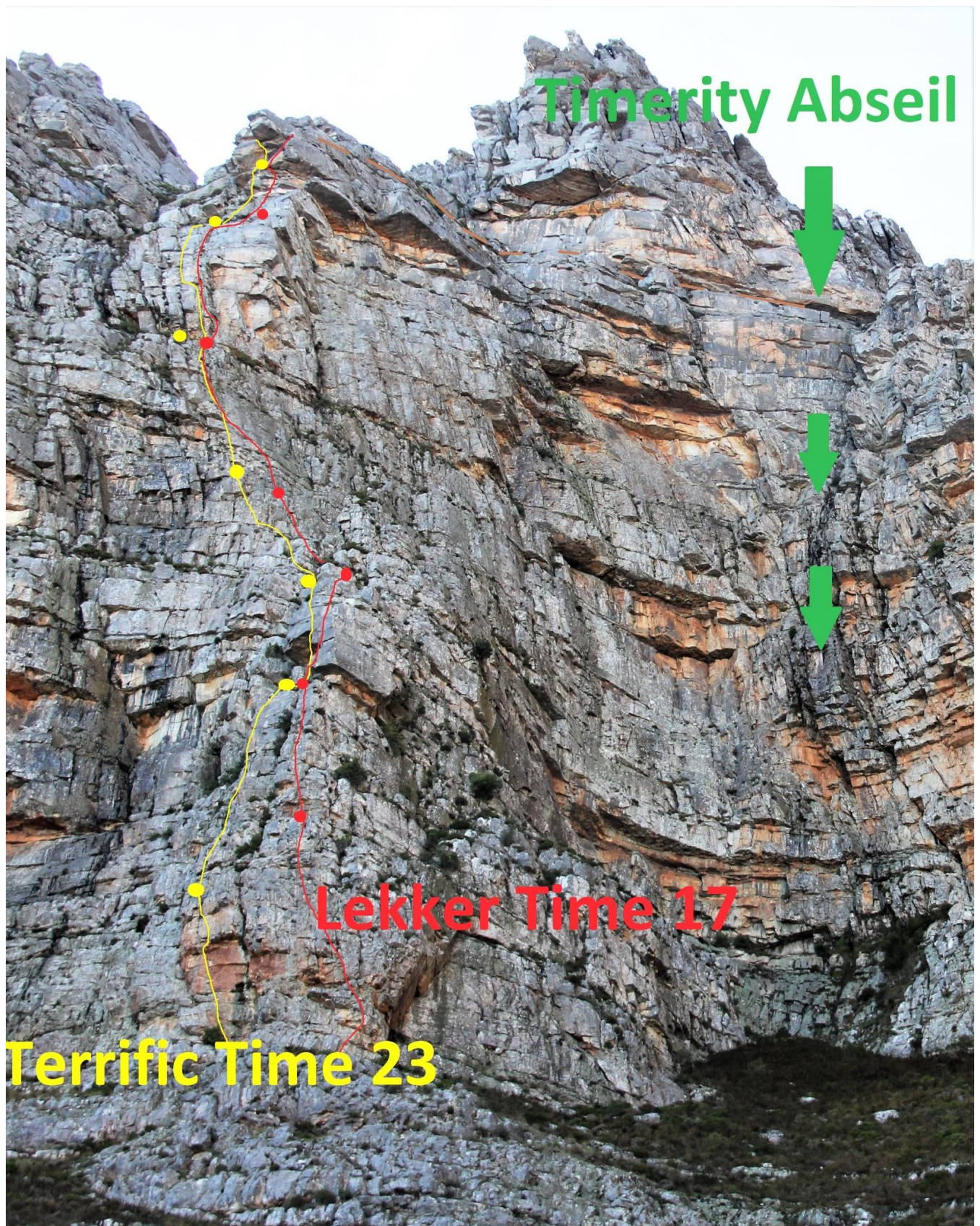
**Snort following the steep but easy pitch 4 on Terrific Time. Photo Brent Russel.**





***Brent just above the crank move on pitch 7 of Terrific Time. Photo. Charles Edelstein Sep 2017***





## LEKKER TIME 17 \*\*\*\*(\*)

View the photo topo. The route starts about 100m left and down from the *Divine Time Buttress* and the *Snotter Canmp*. The first three pitches ascends the front of a 90m buttress to a promontory that is easily identifiable from the rocky scree on the walk-up from where it is best to inspect the route. The buttress is also defined from the tea spot at the start of *Divine Time*. The route then diagonals left up a lichen covered face in 2 pitches to where it steepens. The 6<sup>th</sup> pitch



climbs steep rock to below large overhangs and the final pitch sneaks through an overlap and then diagonals up right to the walk off "cave".

**"Lekker Time"** is one of the best introductory route to Yellowwood for moderate level climbers. It involves interesting problem-solving climbing that is easy to access and the descent is easy to find and close to the top-out. Although the grade is only 17 it nevertheless requires considerable trad climbing experience to negotiate safely. The route is mostly steep with little chance of a ground fall except, possibly, at the start of pitch 3 that requires some careful foot work and judicious gear placement. Pitch 5 denies the route a full 5-star rating and requires **strict adherence to the route description to avoid chossy and dodgy rock**. One feels uninclined to commit to climbing the very steep intimidating lichen covered rock heading up leftwards but the holds are positive and clean, the gear placements excellent and the rock quality much better than it looks.

The name is apt because that is what you are likely to experience, a "lekker" (cool) time. It is therefore an enjoyable route for more advanced climbers to do with their less able partners or friends.

The route can be climbed all year and will dry quickly after rain, within 48 hours. As it is west facing it is shady all morning which can be very cold in later winter and autumn. However, in summer, it is in shade longer than all the other routes on the **East Buttresses** which is desirable on a very hot day.

**Pitch 1:** 40m (16). Start off some boulders below a small orange face capped by a narrow overhang. Climb up to the overhang and do a crank through. Continue easily tending left to stay on clean rock out of the bushy cracks to a good ledge below a short steep yellow face.

**Pitch 2:** 20m (17). Climb the short face and find your way more or less straight up to a left facing recess capped by an overhang. Step up under the overhang and place a bomber small nut that protects the next move. Search for a small but good hold up high round the overhang for your left hand and step round right onto the arete. Continue to a ledge with blocks under a large overhang. (The "small hold" move can be avoided by fighting your way past a yellow wood tree on the left.)

**Pitch 3:** 25m (17). Climb up and head carefully right to the arete. Climb till you are level with the overhang. Make a fist jamb move and continue more easily to a large ledge and belay at the base of a massive block. You are now on top of the pillar.

**Pitch 4:** 25m (16) Move your belay by walking around to the back of the block on its right. Climb up and head diagonally left first on cleanish grey rock but heading for the darker lichen covered rock. Find somewhere to stance after about 25m as pitch 4 and 5 combined is 70m.

**Pitch 5:** 40m (17). Climb carefully on gnarly lichen covered rock (but positive holds) heading left at almost 45 degrees! Do not be tempted to go straight up as it is chossy. Stance at the obvious ledge below a right facing corner system.

**Pitch 6:** 45m (17). Climb 3m or so carefully on juggy holds but swing left 2 metres or so before the overlap above. Going straight up is harder but there is a medium size cam placement above you that you may want to use before stepping left. Once you place the cam reverse a move or two and then swing left. Continue up excellent rock on clean steep juggy cracks to belay before the final overhangs on a large block.





**Pitch 7:** 30m (16)  
Climb up and right to the notch. Crank up and then move left to a point where the overhang is at its smallest. Be careful about using extenders on your pro so as to not incur drag. Climb up and then diagonal right to the skyline on the grey ramp. (Easy). Continue up the crack and find your way to a grassy ledge.

FA: C Edelstein,  
Deon Van Zyl April  
2014

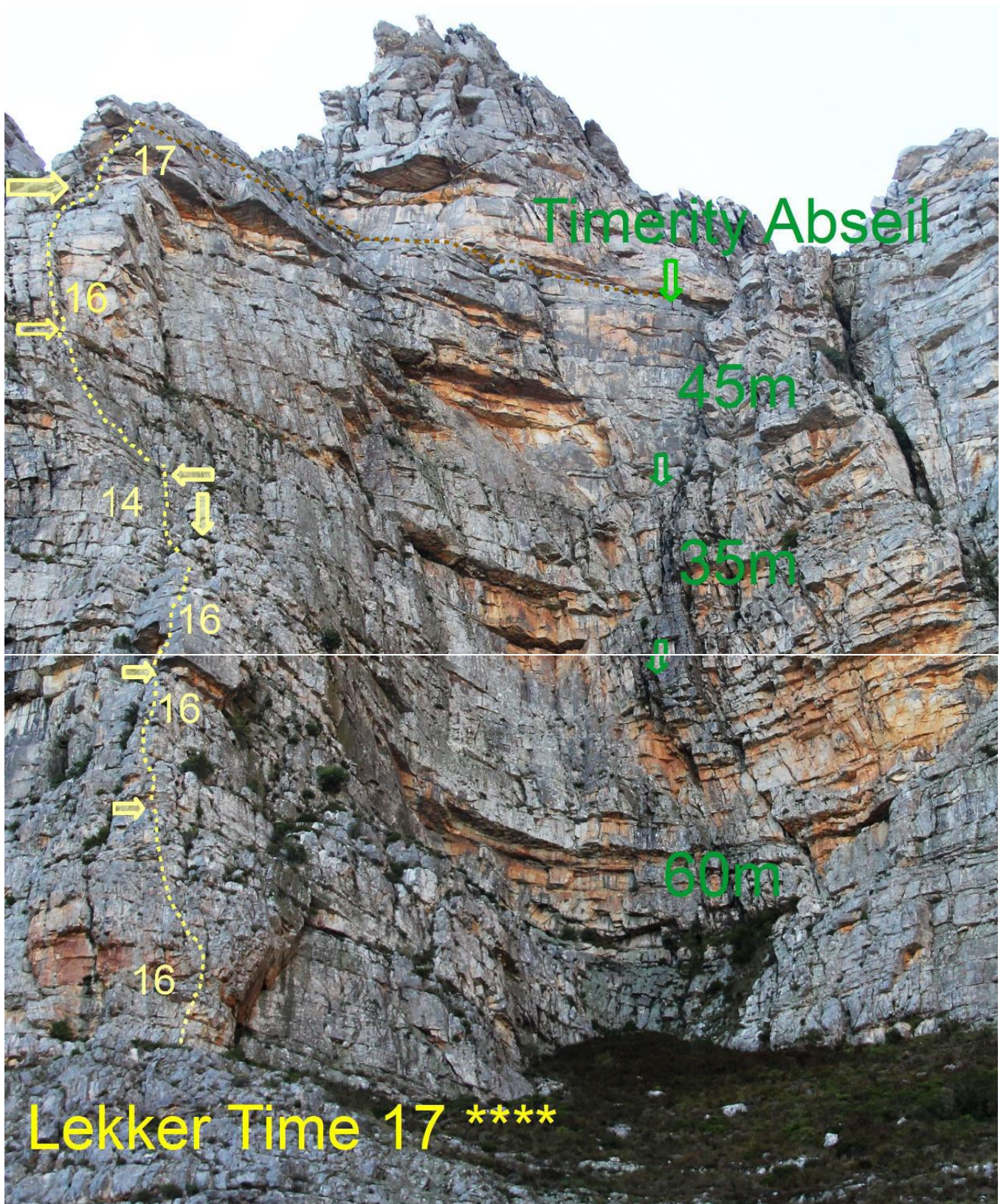
**Descent:**  
**"Timerity Abseil"**  
descent is a few minutes away. . It consists of 3 or 4 elegant and safe abseils.

Walk right (south-west) down the grassy sloping ledge to where the ledge is capped by a huge overhang forming a low cave. Where the overhang ends look down to see a grey square shaped flat block where the bolted abseil point is marked by a red piece of rope connected to a peg.

**Deon Van Zyl on**

**the first ascent starting the 3<sup>rd</sup> pitch. Photo C Edelstein**









***Margaret Milne on the 6<sup>th</sup> pitch of Lekker Time enjoying sunshine after a very cold start. May 2014. Photo: Charles Edelstein***





***Charles Edelstein just past the crux on the final pitch of Lekker Time: Photo Deon Van Zyl***

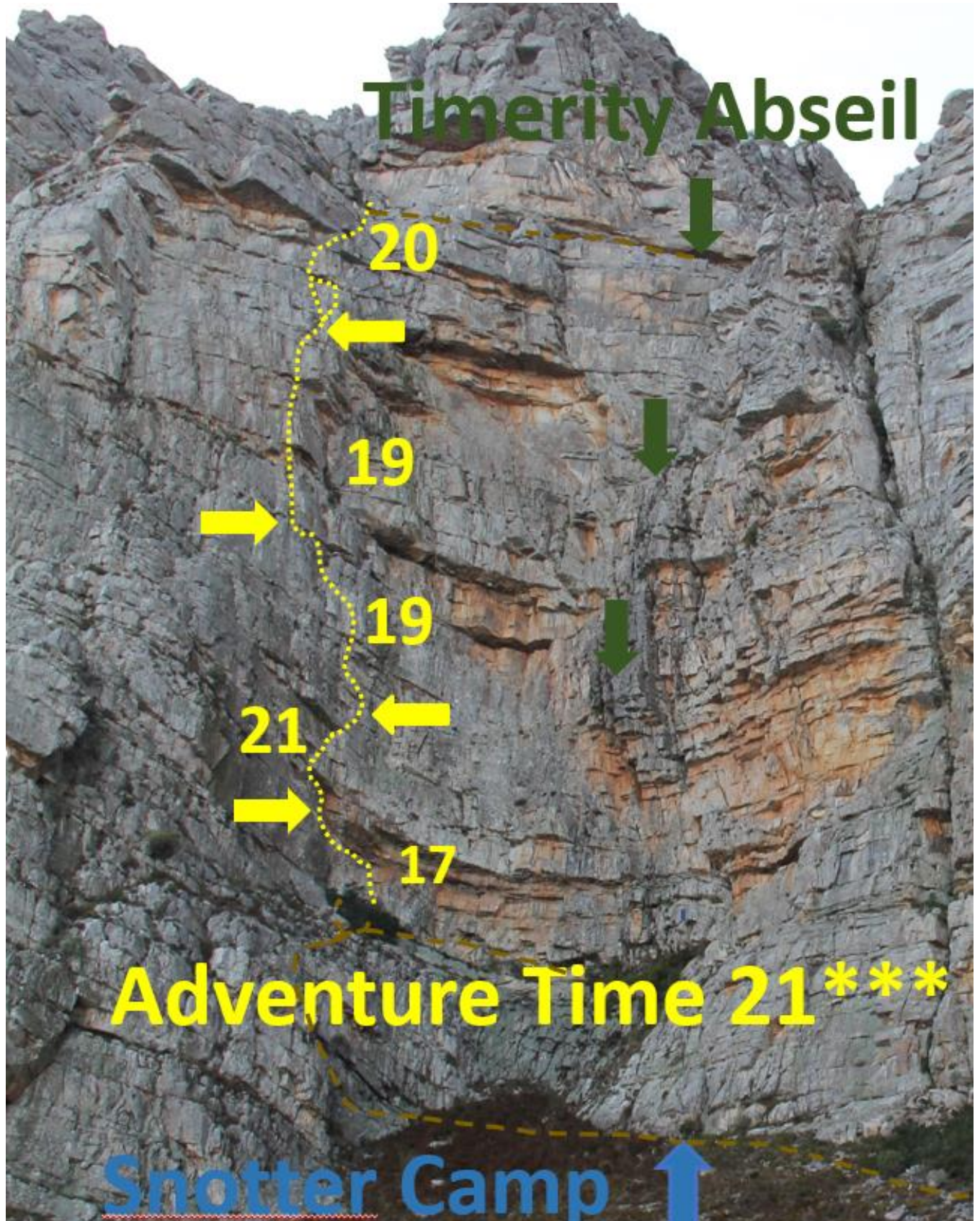




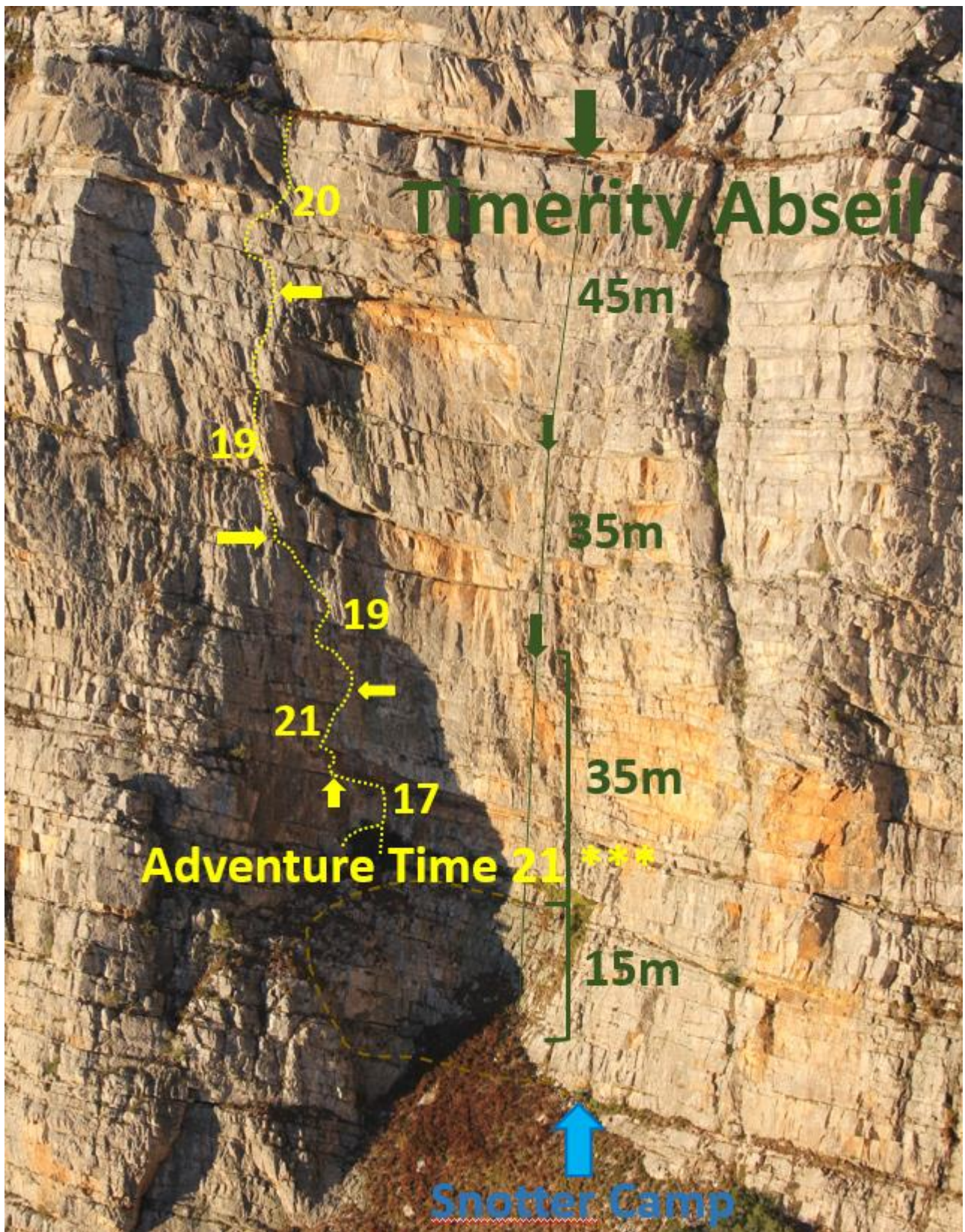
***Duncan Edelstein chilling atop of Lekker Time January 2017: Photo: C Edelstein***



**ADVENTURE TIME 150m 20 \*\*\***







**Start:** Scramble up 150m or so in the bowl between the **Snotter camp** and **Lekker Time**. Start just left of the large clump of yellow wood trees or clamber straight up to the base of the crack.

**Pitch 1:** 25m 17 Avoid a fight through the yellow woods by starting high up to the left and traverse right to the obvious crack in the recess. Or start directly at the base of the crack. Continue up to the overhang and traverse back left to a good stance.



**Pitch 1:** 25m 21 Climb up the grey rock using the pockets to start and then a thin move up right to the rail. Move left up the rail and crank through the pinch in the overhang. Continue to a small overhang and exit it on the right. Climb to a good stance on block marked by a cairn

**Pitch 3:** 30m 19. Head up the large cammed block above. Move out left and then straight up clean rock to where it becomes chossy. Skirt the choss on the left and then come back right to the overhang directly above the stance. Climb past right and into the shallow recess. Tend left to easier ground. Then traverse easily left to a stance and belay off the horn.

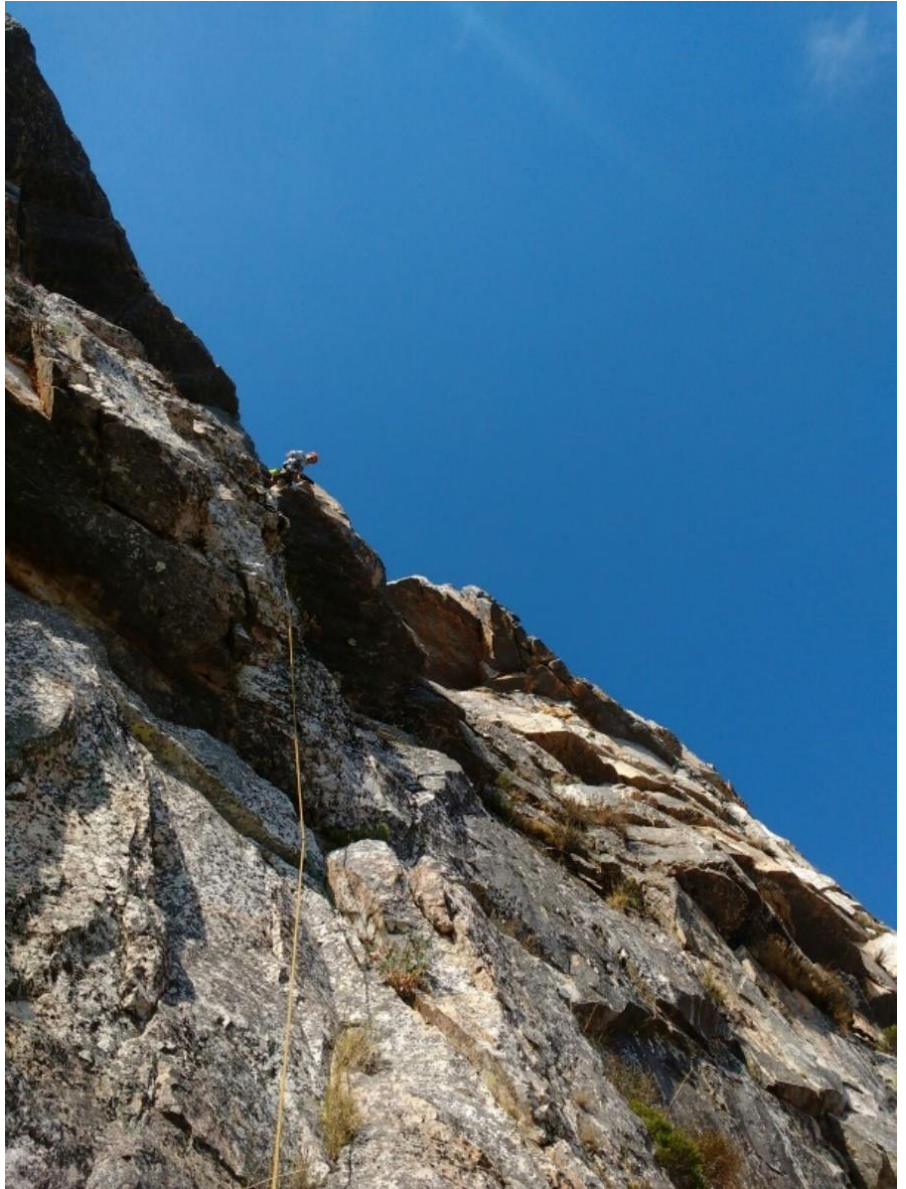
**Pitch 4:** 45m 19 Find your way up to the steep yellow overhanging section visible above. Crank through and continue up to the next overlap. Crank through this and then tend diagonally left to a good stance.

**Pitch 5:** 35m 20. Find your way up to the huge overhang above by first climbing up to the right and then moving left at the rail. (Or have a go at climbing directly up but looks run-out and chossy with lichen.) Move back easily right to a small black recess. Place an excellent micro-cam. Stem up and then out to the right. Pass an overlap and continue tending right up to the walk off ledge. Tree belay

**Descent:** The [Timerity abseil](#) is about a rope length to your right at the end of the cave.

**Gear:** Standard rack with one or two micro cams. Take an extra no 1 or no 2 Camelot for comfort on the stance at the start of pitch 2.

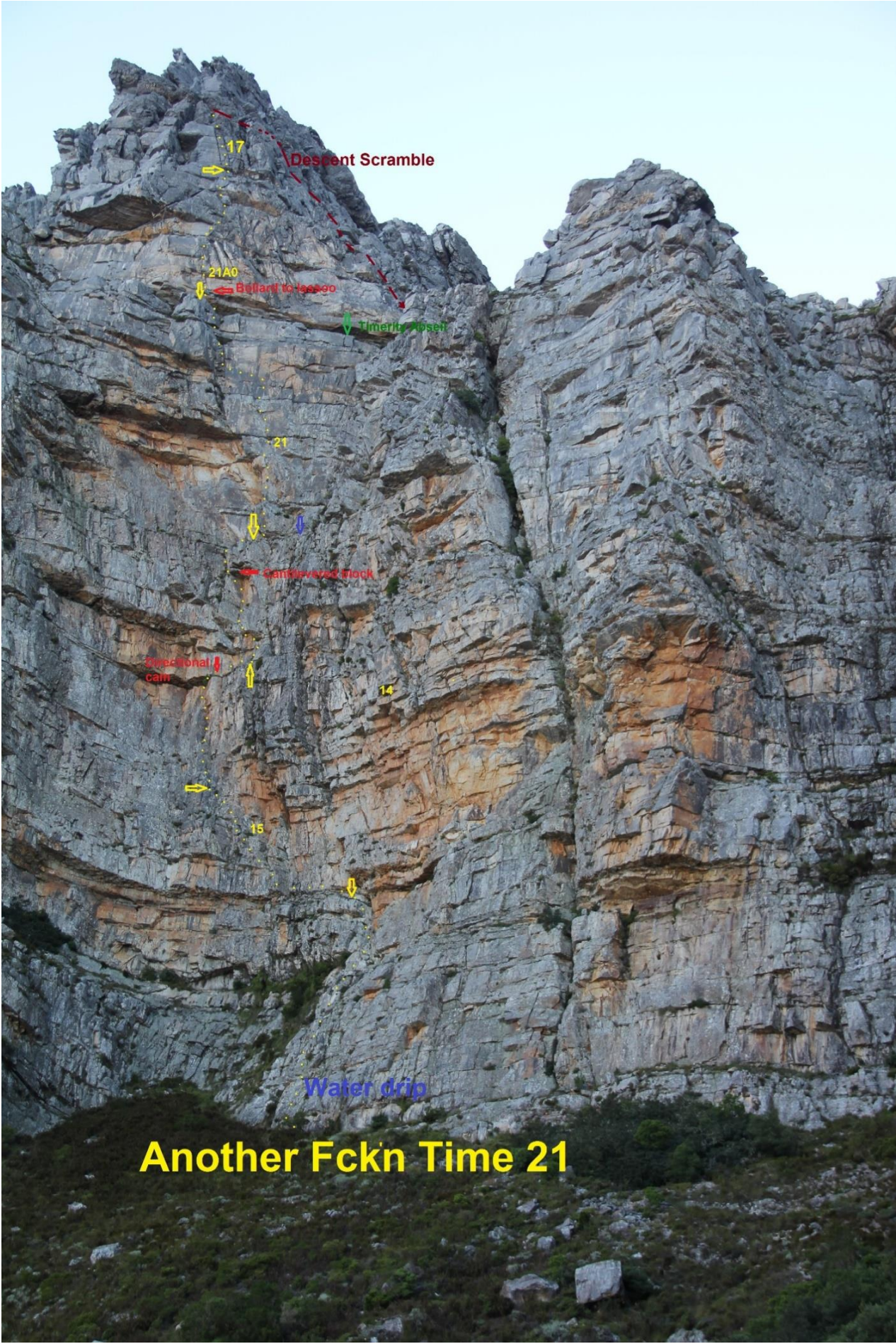
**FA:** Charles Edelstein and James Barclay, 26 April 2017



***Charles Edelstein on the final 20 pitch of Adventure time  
FA: 26 April 2017. Photo: James Barclay***



**ANOTHER FCK'N TIME 220m 21\*\*\*\*\***







**Bruce Daniel and Deon Van Zyl following pitch 3 on the first ascent.** Photo C Edelstein

What is by far the most obvious and impressive panel of rock on the yellowwood **East Buttresses** is what enticed me to investigate new route potential here initially. It is a large upside down triangular face that on reasonably close inspection from various angles seemed to be devoid of a continuous line. It seemed that the only way to actually test the possibility of finding a way up the face would be to abseil down it and inspect it on top-rope. However, this is never a satisfactory way of route finding and it denies the first ascensionist the reward of the on-sight. So armed with a good climbing rack and lots of optimism I cajoled and bullied my buddies Deon and Bruce to join me in finding a way up this most alluring piece of rock.

The route starts at the water drip and climbs easy grey rock to the large ledge system shared with **Play Time**. It continues up left, again on easy rock to a stance that Deon led. The third pitch continues up a crack system on quality rock that I led.

Then Deon found a way up to a stance a few metres below the triangular panel which also was relatively straight forward. Then came the panel (the word “headwall” is a tad too dramatic!). It starts with a steep overhanging crack that required momentarily hanging on a cam to pull out a bush and then continued up a short and steep pillar followed by one of the most stunning pitches I have ever done as a first ascent. It seemed very intimidating but as I moved up, interesting and challenging moves unfolded that were well protected. The pitch is a full 60m of brilliant climbing and ends in the undercut cave above which rears another large buttress.

We considered finding a way up the buttress above but there was no way we could get off the ground. I noticed a bollard around 5m up and with a flick of the rope lassoed it first time. But heat and weariness sent us scuttling home.

Some 8 months later in January 2014 I climbed **Lekker Time** with Tony Dick. We were done just after 12pm and I decided to have another look at climbing the final buttress. It took more than 10 attempts to lasso the bollard and we then climbed 2 very good pitches to the top. The first pitch is steep and tricky. While the last pitch is more forgiving. From there it was an easy scramble down to the rappel level.

This route is as much deserving of 5 stars as any at Yellowwood. It is also longer than the other buttress routes and well over 200m in height.

**Pitch 1:** 45m 15 Starting at the water point and stash, find your way up the cleanest rock to stance on the first good ledge or continue another 4m to stance on a higher ledge system (common with Timerity.)

**Pitch 2:** 25m 15 Traverse low on good juggy rock to a stance next to a grey pillar on your left.

**Pitch 3:** 35m 18 Climb up leftwards up the grey ramp to attain a recess with lighter coloured rock. At the top step left out of the recess and continue to a “dassie” cave. Step out right and place a good directional cam in a “post-box” slit in the upper lip of the rock above the “Dassie” cave. Move right and belay past a large block leaning against the wall.



**Pitch 4:** 25m 20 Move up and left to an overlap and pull through it on the left on dodgy appearing but well tested rock. Continue into the recess above topped by a large cantilevered block. Climb past the block on its left to a stance.

**Pitch 5:** 60m 21 From the ledge crank into a narrow recess on the right. Continue up the front of the pillar above. At the top of the pillar continue straight up to the left leaning crack system. Climb this till it runs out and then move left on a ledge system to the vegetated corner. Climb this to the stance in the massive cave.

**Pitch 6:** 25m 21 A0 or massive reach move. At the cairn look up to see a bollard on the wall 4m above. Lasso it with the rope and aid or climb up to it. Do strenuous moves and move through the narrow gap of the roof a bit to the left. Continue more easily to a good stance.

**Pitch 7:** 25m 17 Climb the juggy rock to stance.

**Descent:** Scramble down the gulley to the right till it opens up. Keep scrambling down moving left facing out on relatively easy rock to the scree even though it seems quite tricky difficult. Once at the scree the **Timerity abseil** is just below you to your right.

First ascent : Pitches 1 to 5 C Edelstein, Bruce Daniel and Deon Van Zyl, April 2014.

Pitches 6 and 7 C Edelstein and Tony Dick 7 January 2015.

FFA pitch 6: Willem (Pecs) Le Roux (Tall-man)

## **ZEITGEIST 160M 25 \*\*\*\*\***

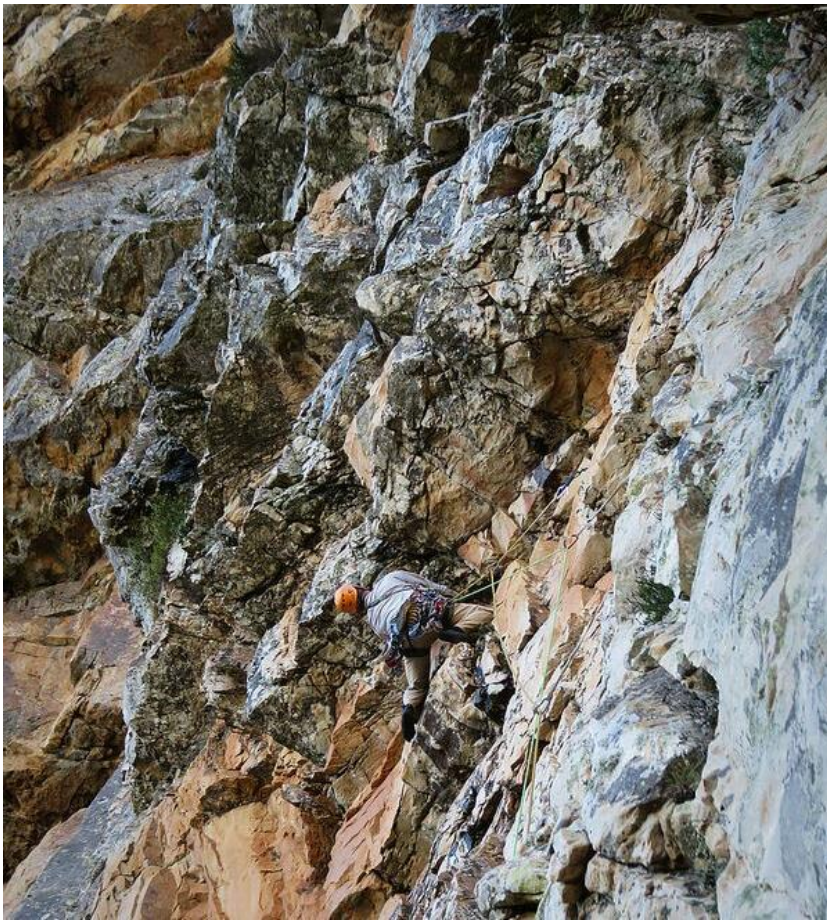
It was the triangular panel on the **Timerity Buttress** that attracted me to the **East Buttresses** above **Yellowwood ravine** in the first place and my ambition was to fire a pitch straight through the middle of it. When I did the first ascent of **Another Fck'n Time** the headwall pitch stymied climbing directly through and I was forced off to the left. I could not for the life of me see a way through at the point where one moves left on the headwall. The **Timerity pitch** on the right flank is one of the best climbing pitches anywhere but also did not quite strike through the middle. But then I noticed a weakness between the two routes some years ago and I fiddled around on a top-rope and realized that the middle of the headwall would go. There was a short 5m crux section that I failed to work out at the time.

In March this year young Luke Eberhard got off route trying to climb the **Timerity** headwall pitch and was stranded at the crux for what seemed hours. I could see him from afar where I was climbing **Prime Time Direct** with Madeleine Sorkin, one of the visiting Americans on the 2017 **AAC/MCSA exchange meet**. Jimbo Smith and Maury Birdwell, (another one of the Americans) had just completed in fine, quick style a free ascent of **Show Time 25** and tossed young Luke a rope. He then proceeded to complete the pitch claiming that he actually managed to free all the moves – something I was not made aware of at the time.

On 3 September the plan was to go and drink tea with my OBF Jimbo and my NBF Garreth at Yellowwood and then consider a pleasant day climbing in the sun on either **African Time or Judgment Day. The Second Coming**, Tony Dick and Dave Davies two thirds route from the eighties also needed a relook.

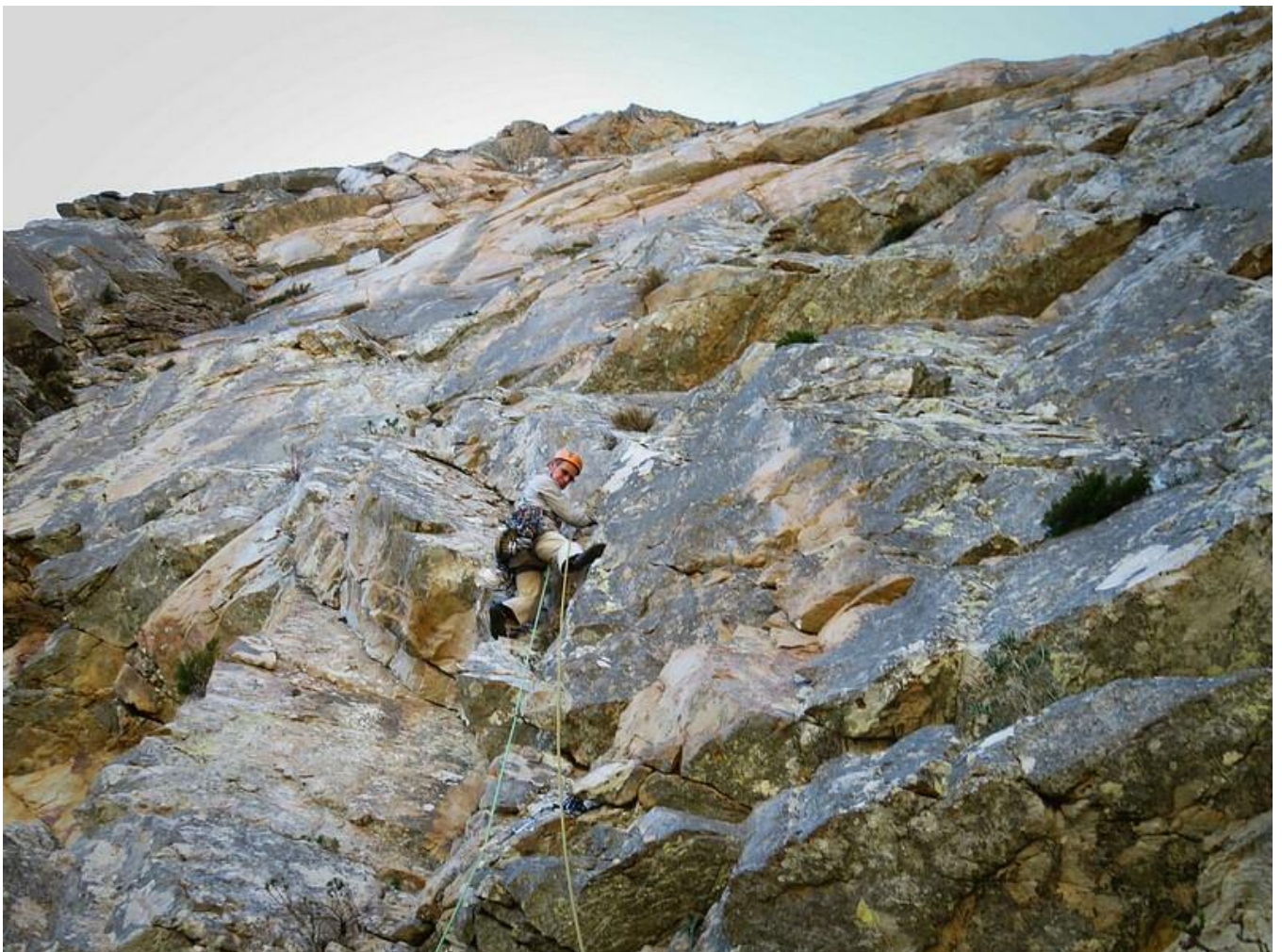
However, when we got there it was too warm to consider climbing in the sun and in perfect temperature I thought that we could fashion a new route between **Timerity** and **Another Fck'n Time**. And by golly, so we did. Well almost.





**Snort on the 2<sup>nd</sup> pitch of Zietgeist 18. Photo Garreth Bird**

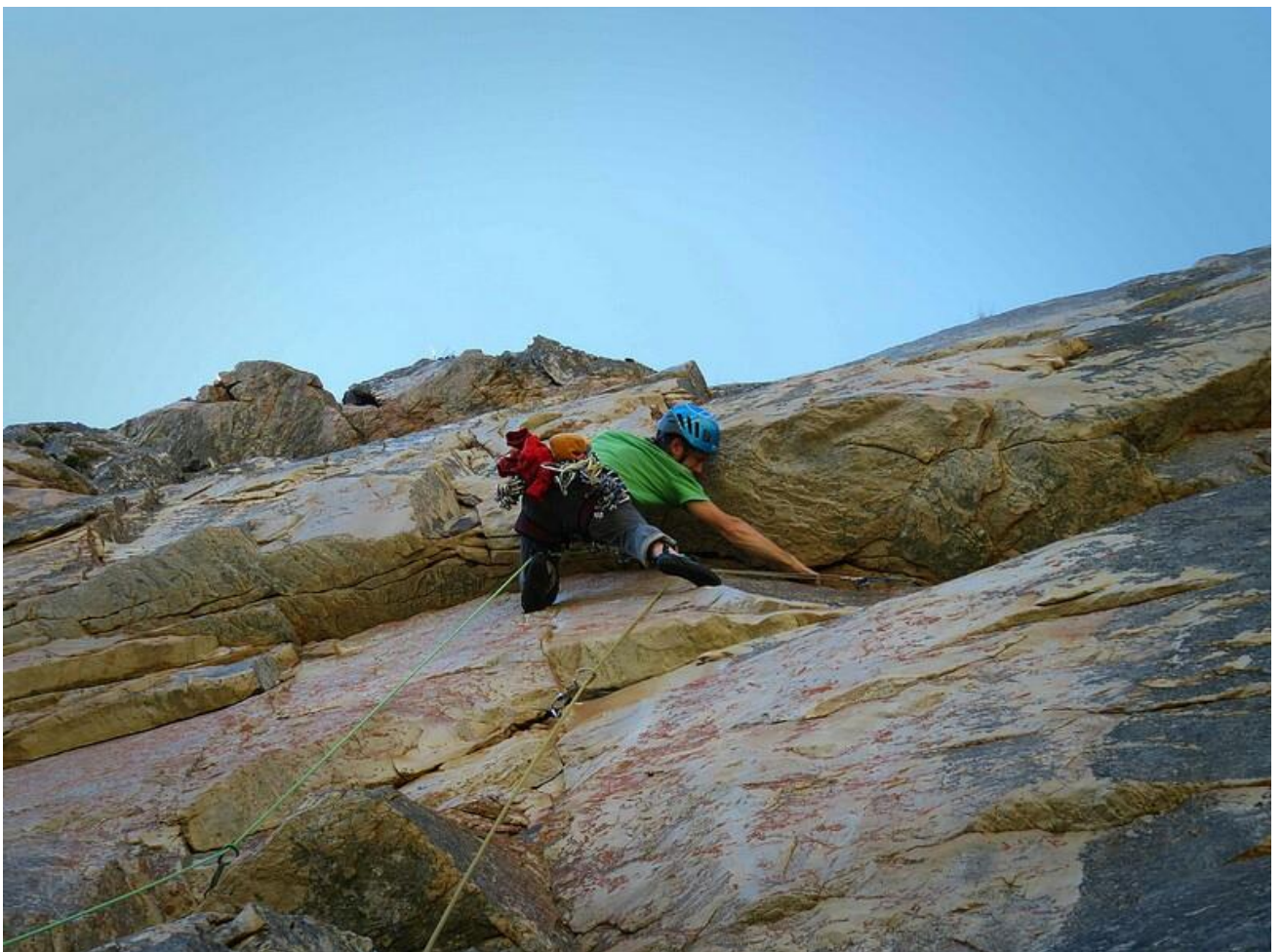
I led off above the scramble pitch shared with **Timernity** and **Another Fck'n Time** and climbed diagonally up to make a stance in a deep recess directly below the last abseil point of the **Timernity Abseil**. Garreth then bombed through the overhangs on a mere grade 20 to stance at the bolted a stance. Jimbo then continued up for a few meters to share a small section of **Timernity** 3rd pitch to then climb the ramp to the left at a very moderate grade too (18) to stance at the next bolted abseil point. I then climbed up a brilliant line that I had done some time ago, to find a small ledge to stance near the bottom of the centre of the headwall proper.



**Snort climbing up the excellent 18 pitch into the middle of the headwall. Photo Garreth Bird**



Jimbo then took the sharp end and after boldly taking a whipper on the crux climbed the pitch free.





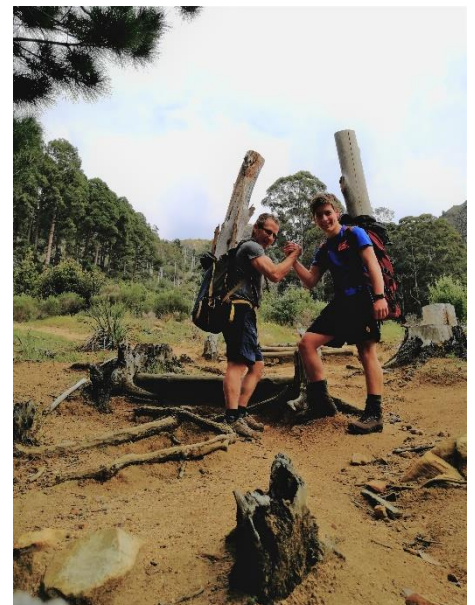


***Jimbo styling and then flying off the headwall pitch of Zeitgeist: Photos Garreth Bird***

On the 10th September, we returned and Jimbo sent the pitch totally free followed by Garreth. We were in 2 parties of two and I then had a go but could barely get the gear out before blowing my forearms. I lowered to the stance and Luke tried and took a fall but after a rest on the gear cruised through to finish the pitch. This is a remarkable feat for such a young lad on proper, run-out intimidating trad even though the gear was pre-placed. Once through the crux it is not over. There is another 3m of run out very tricky 22 climbing on thin holds with pumped forearms. I then managed to follow but I had to rest on the gear before getting through the crux.

Garreth and Jimbo sat above us on top of the ***Divine Time Buttress*** shouting encouragement and beta. We were all chuffed with our efforts.

But the matter did not end there. I spied one of the most interesting and compelling roof cracks I have seen just to the left of ***Timerity*** 5<sup>th</sup> pitch. It was time to go look at it and while Luke and I were finishing off the headwall, Garreth set off up to it. He spent almost 2 hours fighting to get through it and indeed it will go but it won't be easy. He guesses around 26. Young Luke did the honours of cleaning it which took another hour or so. Jimbo and I meanwhile abseiled to the ***Snotter Camp*** and – you guessed it – drank tea.



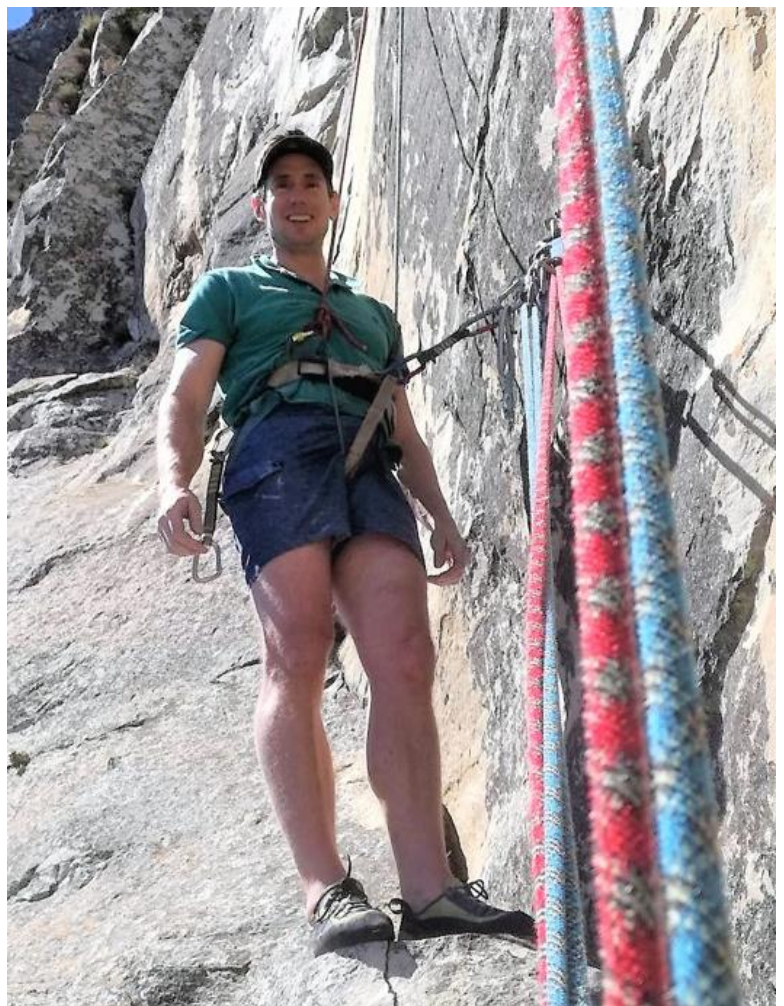
My son Duncan came up with a term this morning as I write this story i.e. ***Brotality***. We were sawing up massive logs in Cecilia forest and carrying them down in rucksacks weighing around 40kg this morning. What an apt name for the roof crack. It was indeed ***Time for Brotality***.





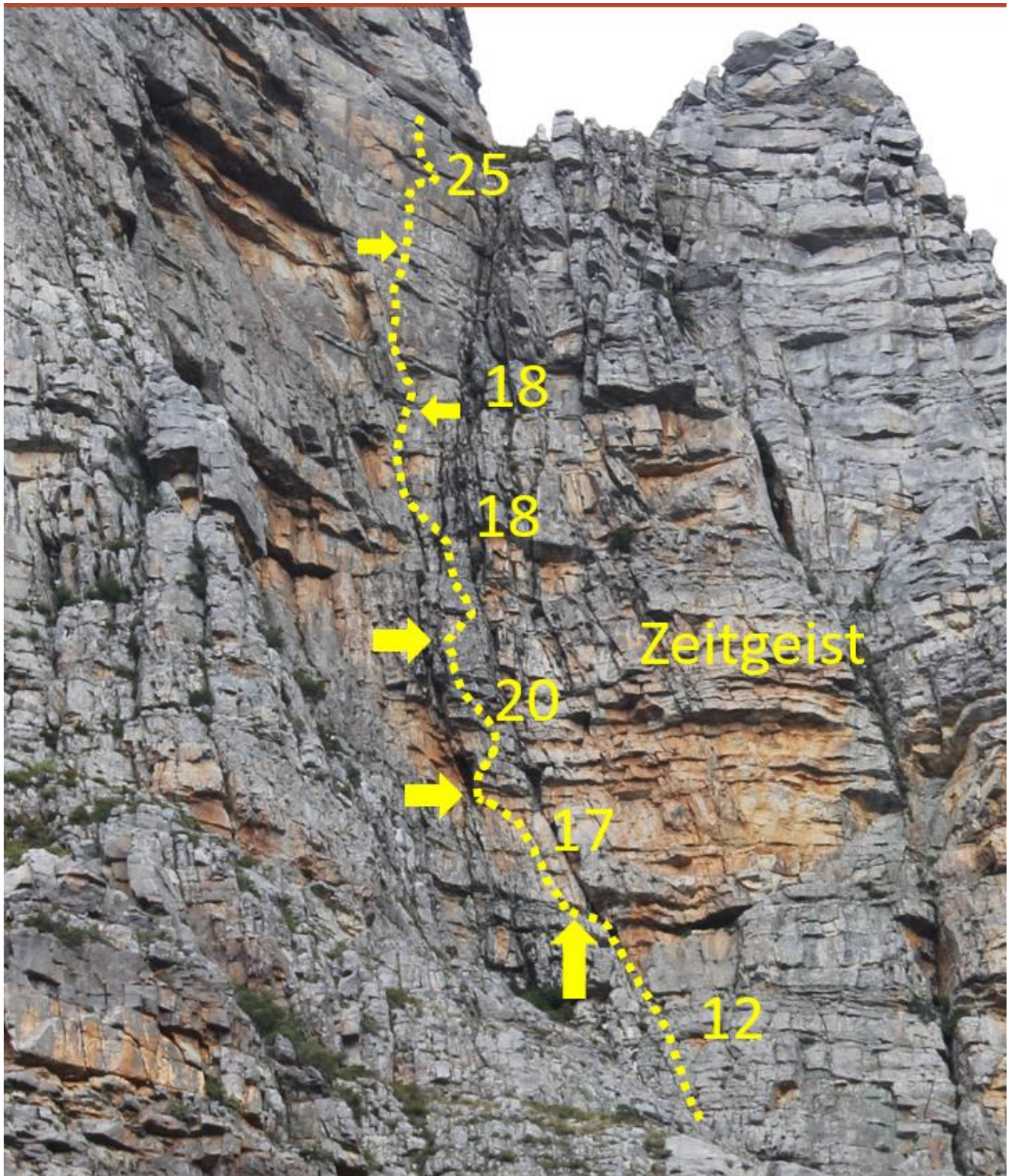
**Garreth Bird fighting his way through the stellar roof crack.** Photo: C Edelstein

All the while another kinda drama was unfolding in the hot sunshine on **Newborn** 29 where Willem Le Roux and Philip Olivier were successfully sending the first half of that route. However, Willem had forgotten his harness and was using my arcane '70s **Whillans Sit Harness**. **Eina!!!!**



**Spot the Crotch Strap.** Photo Philip Olivier





**Start:** Take off from the **Snotter Camp** up the easy ramp just left of the water drums and climb easily for 55m shared with **Timidity** and **Another Fck'n Time**.

**Pitch 2: 17 (25m).** Climb up steeply but easily the very hard quartzite rock and diagonal your way to stance in the obvious deep recess.

**Pitch 2: 20 (20m).** Climb up the right wall of the recess and crank on to the arete. Continue to the overhang above and move left to climb more easily to a ledge with bolted anchors on the last **Timidity Abseil**.



**Pitch 3:** 18 (50m). Climb directly up above the bolts to the overlap and crank through on the right to a large ledge. Climb the grey-black arete on the right side (in common with **Timerity**) to below the bushy gulley. Move left and climb the left leaning ramp to a large ledge. After placing a directional walk left to the abseil bolts on **Timerity**.

**Pitch 4:** 18 (22m). Climb the left leaning ramp past the overhang and then step right to attain a left leaning crack. Climb this for a metre or two and then leave the crack to climb up the face to a small standing ledge.

**Pitch 5:** 25(23m). Climb up the slightly left leaning grey break to where the rock becomes yellow and orange to an obvious under-cling. Do tricky move up and right to the overhang. Place small good cams and move left two metres. Crank the crux on thin holds and continue to a good rail. (Small cams). Finish easily to stance in the shady walk-off cave on blocks.

**Pitch 6: ???26 (40) WORK in progress. The Brotality Roof.**

Walk left about 40m and stance at the same place as **Timerity 6<sup>th</sup> pitch**. Find your way to the roof and fight your way through it with or without aid moves.

FFA: **Zeitgeist (sans Brotality Roof)**. Jimbo Smith, Garrreth Bird, Luke Eberhard and C Edelstein September 2017

## **TIMERITY 220m 22 \*\*\*\*\***

**Time** *noun* the indefinite continued progress of existence and events in the past, present, and future regarded as a whole.

**Temerity** *noun* “*excessive confidence or boldness; audacity. "no one had the temerity to question his conclusions"* synonyms: *audacity, boldness, audaciousness, nerve, effrontery, impudence, impertinence, cheek, barefaced cheek, gall, presumption, presumptuousness, brazenness, forwardness, front, rashness*”

**Timerity** *noun*: The time spent climbing bold, audacious and nerve-wracking routes.

Start at the **Snotter Camp**.

**Pitch 1:** 55m 12. Pleasantly wander up the grey slab on clean rock avoiding vegetated parts and loose rock to a ledge system. Continue up the white rock left of chimney crack to exit on to a ledge and stance.

**Pitch 2:** 30m 19 Climb straight up a metre or two to the left of the crack and then step around right on to the face. Continue to a ledge. Climb the shiny quartzite rock to an overlap. Pull through and continue up to a decent ledge.

**Pitch 3:** 55m 19 (Probably best to stance Head up and slightly left to what seems like grotty black water streaked rock but that climbs really well on fins of rock. Diagonal up left to move left below an overhang to a ledge system. Move left 3m to a large recess. (Stance here if you are getting rope drag). Crank up the arete on the right of the recess and continue to where it becomes a chossy gulley. Escape on to the clean rock on the left and crank through the overlap. Continue to and stance at the bolt belay of the 2<sup>nd</sup> **Timerity Abseil**.

**Pitch 4:** 45 22. This is a superb pitch. Climb about 10m to the first grey roof. Do a lay-back move on the right to attain the face above. Find your way tending left to bypass the next large overhang on its right. Pull through and continue a few more metres to below a small sloping ledge above you

on the right. Step right 2m and then climb on to the ledge (much easier than climbing directly on to it. A stance can be made here.)

Continue up the weathered grey rock on flakes to the orange black streaked rock. Do a tricky move to a rail more or less directly above the belay. Then crank past the overlap (crux). Purist ignore the next info. There is a bomb proof green alien or equivalent placement easily placed just above you to protect this move. Then do tricky (slightly run-out) balance moves to the next overlap. Continue up the black rock to stance at the bolts of the ***Timerity Abseil***.

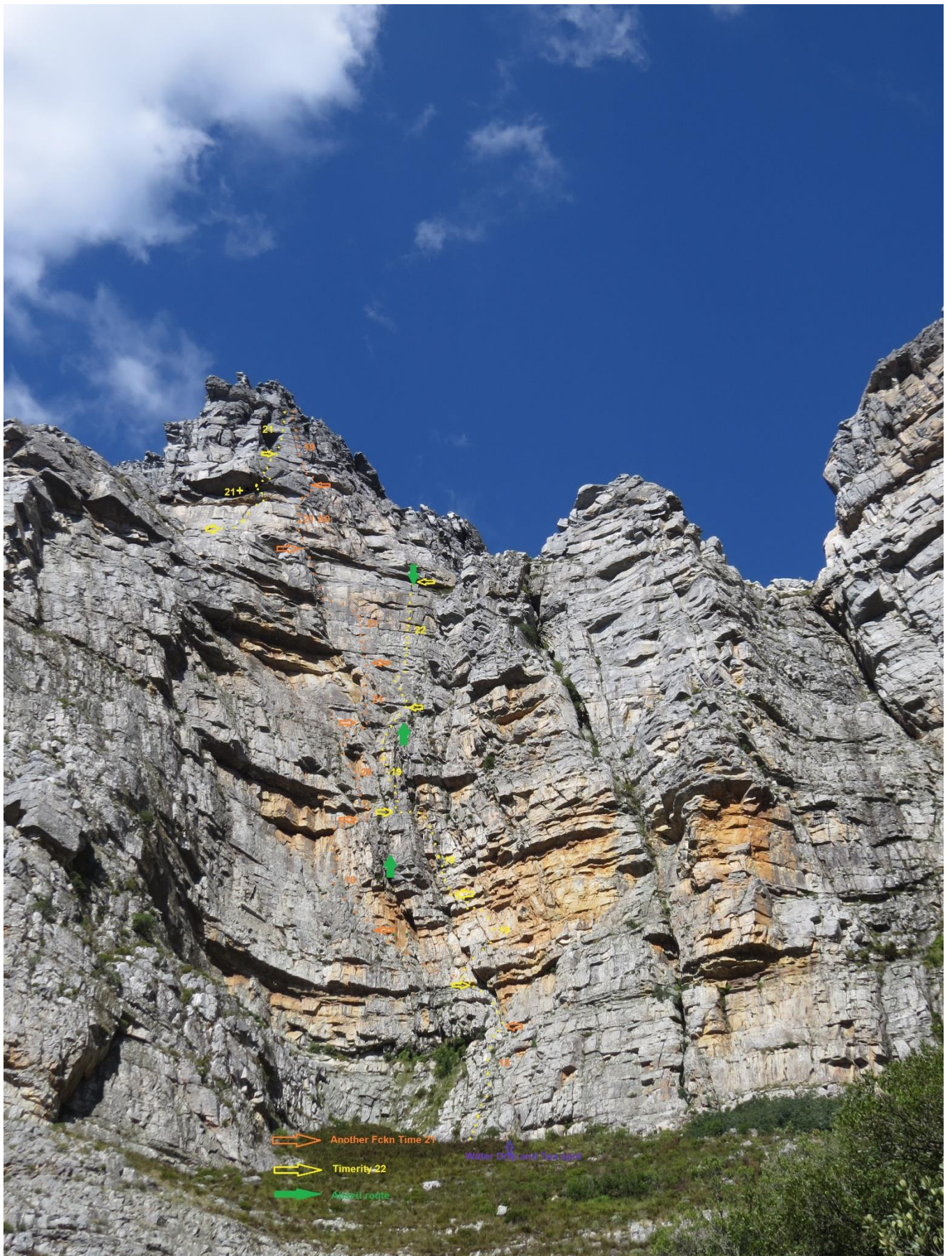
**Pitch5:** 35m 22. Walk left for about a rope length and just past the end of the “cave” what will usually be a rather sunny spot amongst the restios. Above you a ***“Separate Reality”*** crack that is unclimbed to date is visible above. Start below it up the obvious crack and head up right on a fairly easy ramp to a ledge. Place a high Camelot 3 or equivalent and to a strenuous crank up to find jugs on the shelf below the roof. Funky, problems solving moves to the right and then up using hand jams allow you to negotiate the right side of the overhand, further right than is obvious. Climb up more easily to a stance.

**Pitch6:** 25m 21. Climb the grey weathered jugs and high friction rock to the rail level with the overhang on the left. Secure the next slightly run-out moves with 2 bomber pieces. Do thin tricky moves and climb up to the top stance.

First ascent : C Edelstein and Johann Lanz 12 February 2015

**Descent:** Scramble down the gulley to the right till it opens up. Keep scrambling down to the left facing out on relatively easy rock to the scree. Go down to the ***Timerity abseil*** I just below.









***Snort on the 6<sup>th</sup> Pitch on the first ascent of Timerity 22. Photo Johann Lanz***





***Johann Lanz on the crux of the final pitch on Timerity 21. Photo Charles Edelstein.***

**First Ascent: C Edelstein and Johann Lanz 12 February 2015**



## CRUNCH TIME 160M 23 \*\*\*\*\*

In all my memory of climbing I have had the fortune to take a least one dinkum but injury free whipper off a route at least once a year. However, since my screamer a year ago off some easy climbing on a route at Wolf Berg cracks when I sprained my ankle badly, I have not taken a proper leader fall. As year-end is nigh it I thought I should set myself up for one.

About a week or so ago, Brent and I did the first ascent of **Lunch Time** and while scouting around and, also, on top-roping we fashioned some variables to the route. One of the options was to climb the line just to the right of **Timerity** and I top roped it – kind-of. I found it very tricky and a fairly tight rope from Brent belaying me from above made me realize that this would be a bold lead for me at my tender weakening age. In truth I did not really free it at all.

Over the last weekend at Truittjieskraal I did some trad climbing on sport routes and found grade 22 well within my comfort grade. Consequently, I thought what better way to kill two birds with one stone than to lead the pitch to test my confidence on the one hand, or failing that, commit to taking a whipper.

So yesterday with Teador, I went to have another look at the options of climbing an independent line in that area. The first pitch, but for the first 3 meters turned out to be independent and really good clean climbing including a crank through an overhang. The second pitch is shared with **Play Time** but it is a really good pitch on excellent rock.

The third pitch is again independent and ends with a powerful crank through an overhang. I could not see how to free it yesterday as it was a bit wet and difficult to read, but Teodor did so with some beta shouted to him. It is cleaner now and if you know how to hand jamb is probably 23.

The 4<sup>th</sup> pitch climbs the grey rib same as **Lunch Time**.

The final 5<sup>th</sup> pitch is a gem on the headwall akin to its neighbours **Timerity** and **Zeitgeist**. It starts off easy and pleasant up a left slanting grey rib to where it then steepens into a shallow right facing corner. I managed to strenuously place a high half inch cam. (Taller climbers can find an even higher cam placement). I then checked that I had all the cards stacked against me so I could take my annual whipper; I was wearing my completely worn out evolve defy shoes that are almost 2 sizes too big for me and required me wearing socks to stop them rolling on my foot. Secondly a brutal icy South West wind was howling around us so violently so that I could feel the drag of the rope on me every now and then. (I had to lower Teodor off the first abseil point after we finished to ensure the rope did not blow sideways and snag). Finally, I am 59 years old in two months' time and my hands are weakening and my fingers are all stiff and gnarly. So, the set-up was perfect for failure or success depending on how you look at it. It was **Crunch Time** to execute my 2017 whipper!

I inspected the start of the line that amounts to a steep but shallow right facing corner and to try and see into it I moved right along a narrow foot rail and found a sneaky micro cam placement in the yellow face. Now I had two good pieces. I then found some crimps on the face between the two cams and climbed up a couple of metres from where I could see some sloping micro footholds and finger crimps leading me back to the corner. I was now well above my gear being buffeted by the wind on tiny slippery sloping footholds and tiny hand holds all ready to peel off and take a giant plummet. Gravity was pulling me off. Another move on small bits of rock and I was in what one could call extremis with my forearms and calf muscles blowing up but, surprisingly, no sewing machine leg occurred. Keeping my composure, I managed to fiddle in another small cam. But the tricky climbing was not over and it required another few metres of technical run-out climbing before I could stand comfortably and place good gear. Then followed another two mini cruxes but no



whipper! Damn. So, I had to settle with having done one of my best and boldest, if not my hardest trad leads of 2017.

As Margaret my wife would say. **“Take that Sports Lovers”**.

**Pitch 1:** 45m 18. Start just to the right of the drip and climb up to the vegetated recess on lichen covered rock. Step right on to clean grey rock and head straight up to the orange overhang. Approach it from the right and exit it on the left. Stance on the jumbo ledge near the edge so you can see the climber leading the next pitch.

**Pitch 2:** 50m 19. Climb straight up the grey face using one of various options; either a little left closer to the arete, or straight up the crack or a bit further right heading for the yellow rock. Attain the “dassie ledge”. Crank through the overhang protected by a 1.5 inch cam to attain jugs and continue to the long ledge above. Walk about 4 metres left along the ledge and look for a thread point on the face. Crank up just to the right of this and climb the left leaning line on brilliant yellow-orange quartzite. Continue to a comfy ledge (just below the **Play Time** stance.)

**Pitch 3:** 35m 23. Move up 2m to the recess above and then traverse left a few metres on white rock. (**Play Time** exits out right from this recess.) Climb up and right to a ledge. Crank up and then continue up to the left slanting crack system to easy ground to a short, flared chimney. Climb this to a rail and move left. Continue past a perch and head right on orange rock to the overhang. Place and 3 inch cam or two and crank through the gnarly grey fins on hand jams and lay backs and stance on the left. Be careful not to use up your hand jamb slot with a cam! If you do not know how to jamb you gonna have to be very tall or very strong. Keep a medium or large sized cam handy as a directional for your second after the crux.

**Pitch 4:** 25m 15. Climb back out right to avoid the chossy stuff and continue on the grey rib to a stance in the gulley.

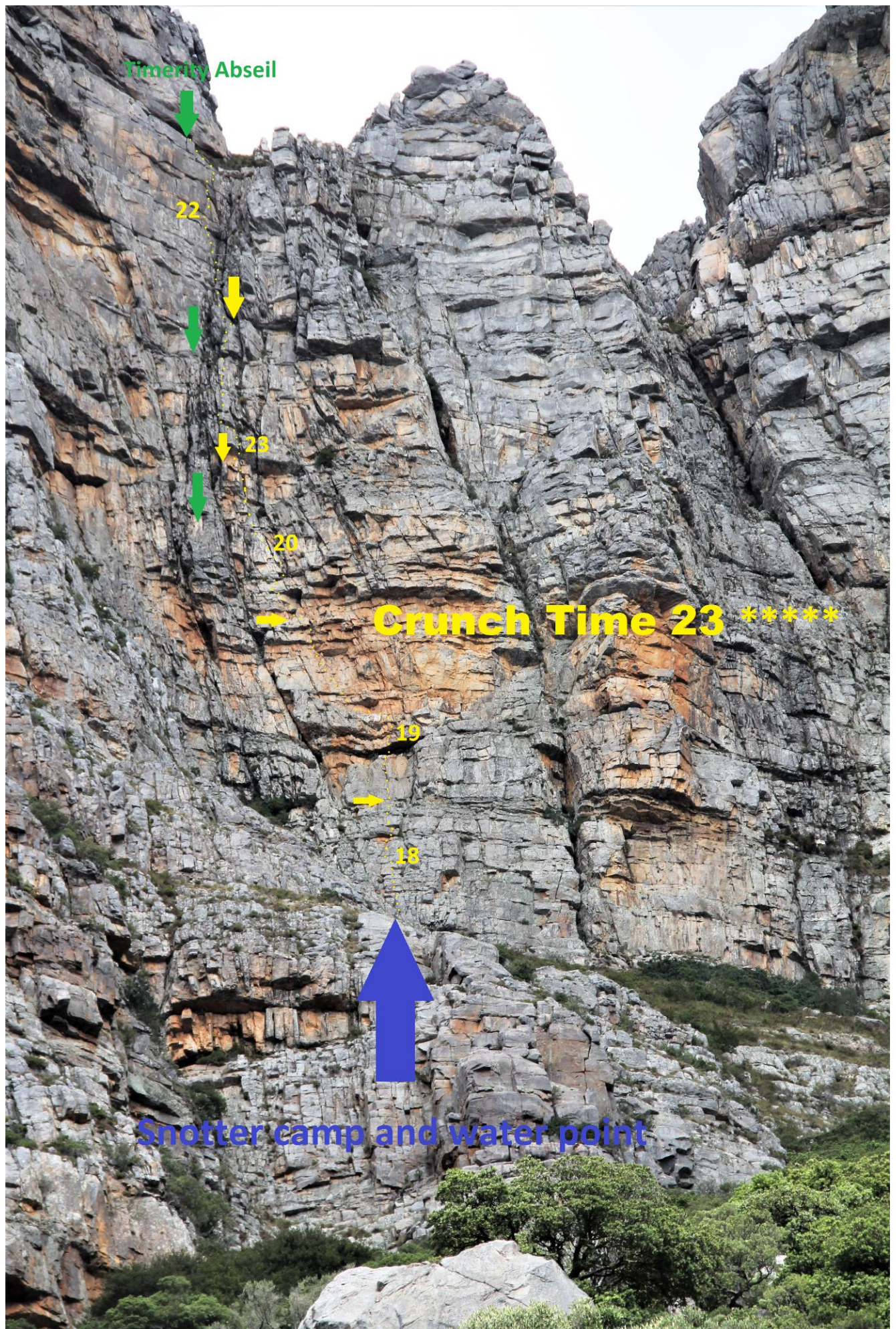


**Brent Russel following pitch 3 grade 20. Photo C Edelstein Oct 2017**

**Pitch 5:** 40m 22. Climb the easy grey rib to where it steepens at a shallow right facing corner. Climb straight up if you are quite tall or use small holds on the face on the right to step up and then move back into the corner. Continue to the obvious lay-back flake and on to a rail. Move a metre or so right and then climb the grey face to stance at the top anchors of the **Timidity Abseil**.

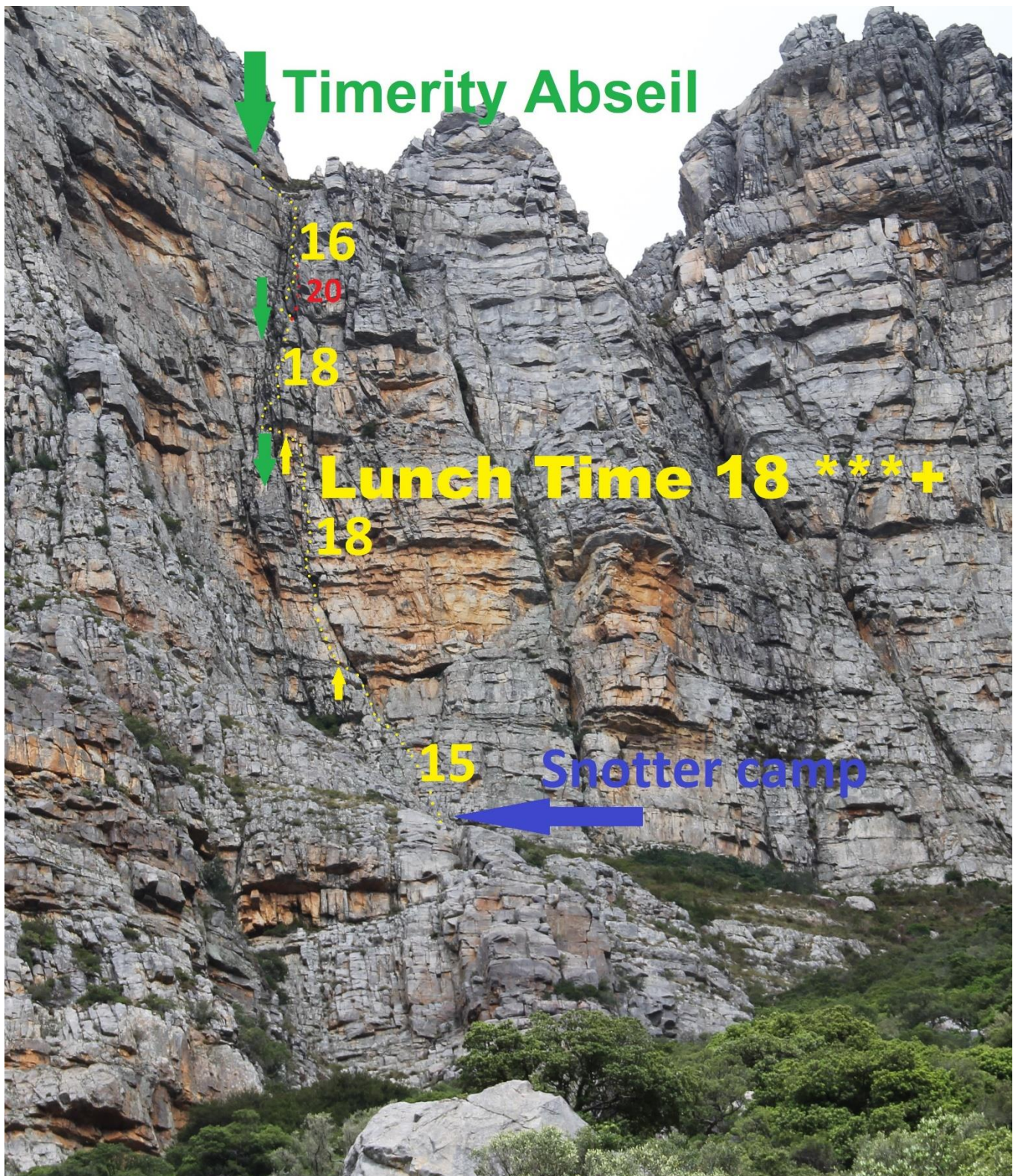
FA. C Edelstein October 2017 with Teodor Iliev and Brent Russel (on pitch3).







## LUNCH TIME 160M 20 \*\*\*1/2.



**Lunch Time** is so called because you should easily finish the route and comfortably be enjoying your lunch back at the base and even before the route becomes sunny and hot. It serves as a good introduction to Yellowwood climbing and overall is the fastest route to do (other than, perhaps, **Yellowwood Crack** that is not nearly as good). A skilled party should be able to do it in 4 pitches and tick it off in 2-3 hours. There is one very short section of 20 which with beta is probably really, only grade 19. One can easily bypass this short crux on the left at grade 15 or so

**Pitch 1:** 16 55m. Start just to the left of **Divine Time**. Step up on the lichen covered face and the use the clean grey bulging block on the right to avoid the chossy gully on the left. Continue up



easily slightly diagonally left to bypass the orange overhang at 20m. Stance as for **Timerity** and **Zietgeist** and **Another Fckn Time**.

**Pitch 2:** 18 30m. Climb up parallel to the deep wide crack on the right to bypass the overhang with a crank move on the right. Continue up the grey appearing gnarly pillar that is easy climbing on clean holds to stance on a small perch below the overhang.

**Pitch 3:** 18 30m. Traverse left about 5m to avoid the gnarly crack through the overhang. Then up 2 metres or so as to traverse back right above the overhang. Continue on easy rock to a stance in the gully.

**Pitch 4:** 16 45m. Continue up the gully on the clean grey rib till able to step back right. Or crank up on the right grey wall to attain the arete using laybacks until able to stand on balance (grade 19+). Continue on mostly easy clean grey rock all the way to the top past another short lay back but easy cranky section. Once almost level with the **Timerity Abseil Point**, traverse carefully over grassy ledges and belay at the bolts or back in the cave in the shade.



**Brent getting high on the Buchu in flower pitch 3:** Photo C Edelstein Oct 2017

FA: Charles Edelstein and Brent Russel 3 Oct 2017

**Beta pitch 4 grade 20 variation:** If you are a purist do not read this section. Getting of the belay ledge to where you are on balance is not obvious as you cannot see any holds or gear placements after about 3 or 4 metres. Keep your rack light as it is strenuous. Crank up to place a good half inch cam at about 3m. Then feel for an excellent sharp lay back up and right to crank up and allow you to step right. An excellent sling placement over a horn is easily then placed. It then gets easier. If you get it right the crux is really only 19 or even 18. It is not harder than say, **Atlantic Crag Crux** and much safer with very good gear.



## PLAY TIME 160m 20 \*\*\*\*



*Hugh Willis belaying Tony Dick at the start of Play Time. Photo C Edelstein*



# The (near) Perfect Trad route?

(Authors note: *What follows was written at the time that Play Time was first climbed. In the 3 or so years since, a multitude of new routes have been established at Yellowwood some of which are as good and many a lot better than Play Time; perhaps even what one could view as the perfect trad routes. C Edelstein October 2017.*)

Rock Climbing is probably one of the most esoteric activities in the world with everyone having a personal “take” on it. The very nature of climbing is that it is as infinitely nuanced as the rock is on which it takes place. Climbing lore abounds with lies, tall tales and interpersonal strife especially at the “cutting edge” of the sport (if indeed it can be called that) not least of which are the almost annual debacles that occur on Mt Everest. We all, I suppose, want to be acknowledged and to leave a legacy –preferably an honest and favourable one unlike Maestri who bolted Cerro Torre. And we all have our way of going about it.

Climbing traditionally had no defined rules, only a loose set of ethics that vary from time to time and place to place. In the past, everyone had their personal preference, favourite place and particular style and we created and modified the rules to suit ourselves. The rapid and dramatic commoditisation of climbing in the last 30 years or so has made it accessible to millions of people who frequent not only the rock faces but the indoor climbing gyms with over 5 million members in the USA alone. Sponsors and the media now dictate the rules and the climbing “athlete” has emerged. These climbers spend a huge amount of time kow-towing to their puppet masters and climbing with a camera lens pointed at them.

The commercialism of climbing has all but killed the adventure. Everest has become every person’s mountain with children, grannies and “disabled people” doing annual ascents.

Fixed gear is mostly the norm on rock routes that are contrived through the most unlikely blank sections of rock with bolts, not features, defining the line.

Recently the [Jeopardy wall on Table Mountain](#) seems to have captured the imagination of every climber that is capable of climbing those grades and [Klein Winterhoek Amphitheatre’s](#) virtues have been extensively extolled on our web pages. Both climbing venues can be considered home to some of the iconic trad routes but it is an extreme irony to me that both areas rarely get on-sight free ascents. “Oceans of Fear” has never been on-sighted and its trad status is questionable in that many of the hardest moves are protected by bolts. The routes on the Jeopardy Crag are (almost) invariably head pointed and all 3 of the cruxes on the original Jeopardy are protected by fixed gear.

One thing though, that has endured over the last 100 years in the broader trad climbing community is the concept of the “**classic**” climb. Most of these classic climbs are not particularly hard and nowhere near “**perfect**” but by and large see far more ascents than the harder routes. You will not read much about them in the media. One only has to think of Nutcracker in Yosemite, A Dream of White Horses in the UK, Arrow Final on Table Mountain, Exposure in F Major and Northwest Frontal in Du Toits. These routes have stood the test of time and the climbers who fashioned the first ascents have left a fine legacy for others to admire and try to emulate. These are climbs for the ordinary man, not the career climber or the outlier sponsored athlete.

I have been trad climbing for 38 years or so and I have been searching for the (near) perfect trad climb for about 35 of those years and I think I may have found it.

But First: What is the perfect trad climb. Of course, this is open to debate and this article hopefully will be stimulating in that regard.



Here is my take:

1. **It must be broadly appealing and easy:** I have done first ascents of several routes that I used to consider to be my best at Blouberg and Yellowwood and elsewhere and they all fail as they are too remote, too hard or too scary or all three for most ordinary people to do – and that means me too because I dumbed some of them down with fixed gear and by and large “head-pointed” them. Not one of these routes have had an independent ascent during their existence that ranges from 3 to 17 years. The perfect grade for the perfect route should not be more than say US 5.7 or 5.8, British HVS or E1 5a, French 5a or b. And SA and AUS 17/18.
2. **It must be an aesthetic line:** The route should ideally follow a stand out feature in the area where it is situated like a crack system, dihedral or arête. Cape Sandstone does not lend itself to continuous lines so this is a tricky one in the local context but “Smallblaar Ridge” is the winner locally!. On TM “Africa Arête” is spectacular to look at and Africa Edge is very cool to climb. “Satisfaction Guaranteed” and “Big Corner” at Tafelberg are obvious lines.
3. **It must be continuously steep on good rock and “safe”.** Classic routes such as “Arrow final”, “Exposure in F”, “Northwest Frontal” and “Eight Miles High” have a history of serious accidents as they all lack in this department. There must be no hanging stances.
4. **It must have no pin scars, manufactured grips or fixed gear of any kind whatsoever.** One of the all-time “classics” in Yosemite is “Serenity Crack”. This, like many “free” routes in Yosemite, the Dolomites and elsewhere around the world exist entirely as the result of pin scars. It is unlikely if any of the major big wall routes on El Cap would ever be climbed free without what amounts to chipped holds and bolts.
5. **It must be multi-pitch and long.** Few classic good routes are more than a pitch or two.
6. **It must be of consistent grade and quality.** Very few classic routes are. I can’t think of one that is that is more than a 100m or so long that is consistently good – top to bottom.
7. **It must be accessible but still require a decent effort to get to and do.** You must get home and feel worked and tired at the end of it.
8. **It must invoke a sense of awe (or “wow”) and be a little intimidating before, during and after.**
9. **It must be high above the surrounding terrain and have a vista.**
10. **It must have a bold, wild, airy exposed feel about it** even if it is not actually remote.
11. **It must be adventurous.** It must be achievable but success must not necessarily be guaranteed on the first attempt if the grade of the route is at or near your limit. So it must not be for sissies who fear failure.
12. **The climbing must be varied, funky and interesting – moves must require some thought to work out.**
13. **It must be all seasons** especially in South Africa.
14. **Escape off the route must be relatively uncomplicated** although it can have an “epic” aura about it.

15. **It must be on clean rock that does not require frequent ascents to keep it “climbed into condition”.** There are many classic routes in the UK that would be complete choss but for the fact that frequent ascents keep the cracks and gear placements free of mud and vegetation.
16. **There must be a pub at the end of it to prolong the “feel-good” with your climbing partner(s).**

Readers are invited to critique or add to this list which is certainly not complete.





***Deon on the second pitch.! Photo C Edelstein***



**Deon Van Zyl on the 3<sup>rd</sup> pitch. Photo C Edelstein**

Recently, Deon Van Zyl and I fashioned what I consider to be the closest to a “perfect” trad route I have personally ever climbed. In terms of the “perfect line” it cannot compete with Smallblaar’s knife edge line or “Africa Arête” but it is right up there with the best in all other criteria listed.

There is no move that is really harder than grade 18. (I think of the move off the ground and the crux on Atlantic Crag on TM and there is nothing quite as hard as that). **BUT** it has more moves of grade 16 or 17 than on any route I have ever climbed. It just goes on and on and on for around 160m (400ft) of climbing. It is more consistent than its neighbour route **Divine Time 19**, it is well protected, has safe comfortable stances but feels totally “out there!”



It requires no special gear; a standard rack with a full set of cams to 3” and nuts to size 10, 6 quick draws and 6-9 slings is all that is required. It is in the shade most of the morning and experienced climbers will be done in less than half a day. The descent is down the user friendly abseil route a horizontal rope length walk to the right and I have done the abseil 5 times now without misadventure – once in high wind.

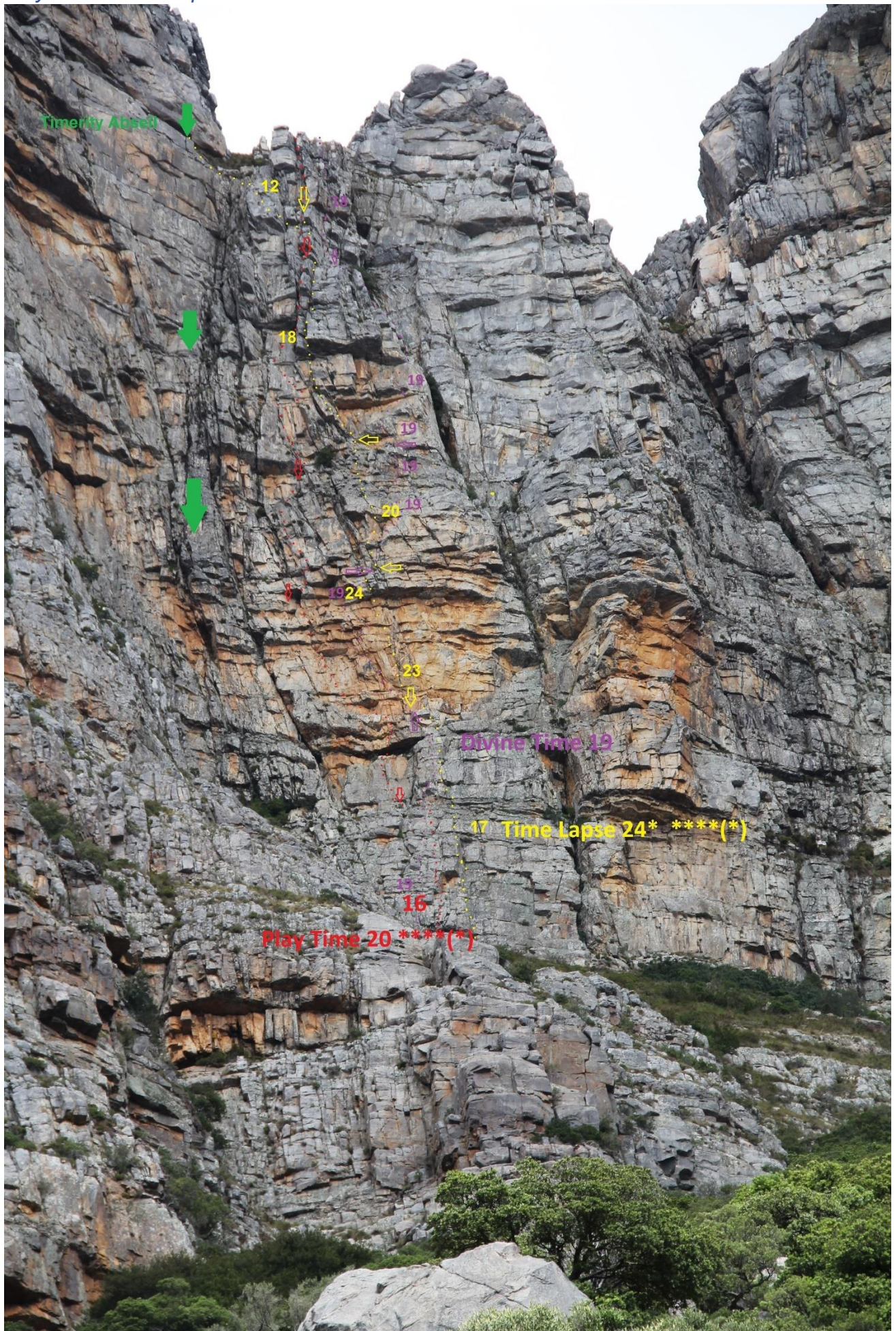
The pub is an hour walk and 5 minute drive from the base – so even condition 16 is ticked.

I have many friends who are passionate about climbing including Margaret my wife and our average age is now well over 50. Most climbers in the world and especially people my age feel very tested on routes like “Magnetic Wall”, “Atlantic Crag” and even “Jacobs”. “Play Time” is a very do-able “big” “bold” route that I would recommend to anyone that has some experience of trad climbing. I am content to climb and share this route with all my friends. What could be more “perfect” than that!

Time will tell whether the trad climbing community will put its stamp of approval on this route and if it will deserve being regarded as “iconic” or “classic” by future generations.

It is called, **“Play Time!”** It is at Yellowwood!







## PLAY TIME 160m 20 \*\*\*\*+

**Pitch 1:** 16 50m. Start 4m right of Divine Time. Climb up onto the block and do a high step through the undercut onto the face. Continue to below the overhang and step onto the arête. Continue straight up to the ledge and walk left past the base of the grey pillar to a stance.

**Pitch 2:** 18 35m. Avoid the vegetated corner on the right and climb the grey clean crack to the dassie ledge. If you can reach the holds place a good nut and 1.5 in cam and crank up to jugs and continue to a narrow ledge. (Avoid the crank by moving to the grey pillar on the right and then back left – not very aesthetic.) Walk left along the ledge a few metres. (Remember to leave a directional piece for your second.) Climb the polished white and orange rock tending up left to stance in the cubbyhole.

**Pitch 3:** 20 30m Climb out right of the cubbyhole to a recess. Move up right out of the recess. Climb up diagonally left past an excellent finger lock to a below a large jammed flake. Lay back past the flake as is this the easiest way to do this – just trust your feet. Continue up tending a little right to stance right below the roof on the right.

**Pitch 4:** 19 45m Climb straight up for about 3m and then up the flakes for another 3m. Traverse right 4m under the thin overhang to a ledge. Place some gear on the right and then negotiate a move back left to find good jugs. (Do not climb the crack on the right – loose rock.) Continue up the face staying 3m left of the dihedral on the right and then move right to the arête when 3m or so below the large overhang. Continue up the chimney crack to stance level with the large yellowwood bush seen on the right on Divine Time.

**Pitch 5:** 30m 16. Climb inside the chimney or outside on the flakes and continue straight up to the top.

**Beta:** This route is climbable after rain but it is harder but still safe. You will find lots of wet holds that make the footholds seem very insecure.

The gear is really good where you need it to be.

On the third pitch, once you are in the recess do not exit it on its left. It really is not that tricky going right and much cleaner and easier. The climbing is really excellent. Going left lands you in hard scary choss.

## DIVINE TIME 160m 19 \*\*\*\*\*

**Start:** View the topo on the photograph. The route starts just right of the “Snotter Camp” and takes the first gap through the overlap. The start is marked by a cairn on a whitish coloured block.

**Pitch 1:** 55m (19). Climb up on to the white rock and place a high large cam. Crank through to a jug using a rounded pinch. Continue straight up the good quality but easy grey rock to a ledge at 35m or so. Start up the obvious recess and step right onto the face/pillar and continue tending slightly left to a ledge with some blocks at the base of the orange rock.

**Pitch 2:** 35m (19). Head for the left-leaning recessed red ramp and continue to below the large overhang. Climb through the overhang on the right. One can place excellent gear at the lip from an under-cling in the corner under the overhang. Make sure you have very long slings to avoid drag if you choose to leave gear in the rail under the overhang. Swing out right and climb up right to a small stance 3m above.



**Pitch 3:** 25m (19). Follow the good rock diagonally right passing the first triangular overhang on black stained rock but good jugs. Continue up past the second, larger triangular overhang on the right and then straight up as per the photo topo to a ledge. Crank straight up and then lay-back strenuously up the grey flakes above to a large ledge.

**Pitch 4:** 50m(19). Place a 1 inch cam high up on the right. Climb up the left lay back flakes to easier ground. Above you are huge roofs. Move up to under the roof and then pull through the obvious notch about 3m to the right to find yourself under another massive roof system. Exit this easily on the right and then climb straight up the arete to belay left of a large yellow wood tree/bush.

**Pitch 5:** 25m (18). Climb the obvious recess using the flakes for about 12m and then do a crank through the overlap to continue more easily to the top.

*FA: C Edelstein, Deon Van Zyl February 2014*

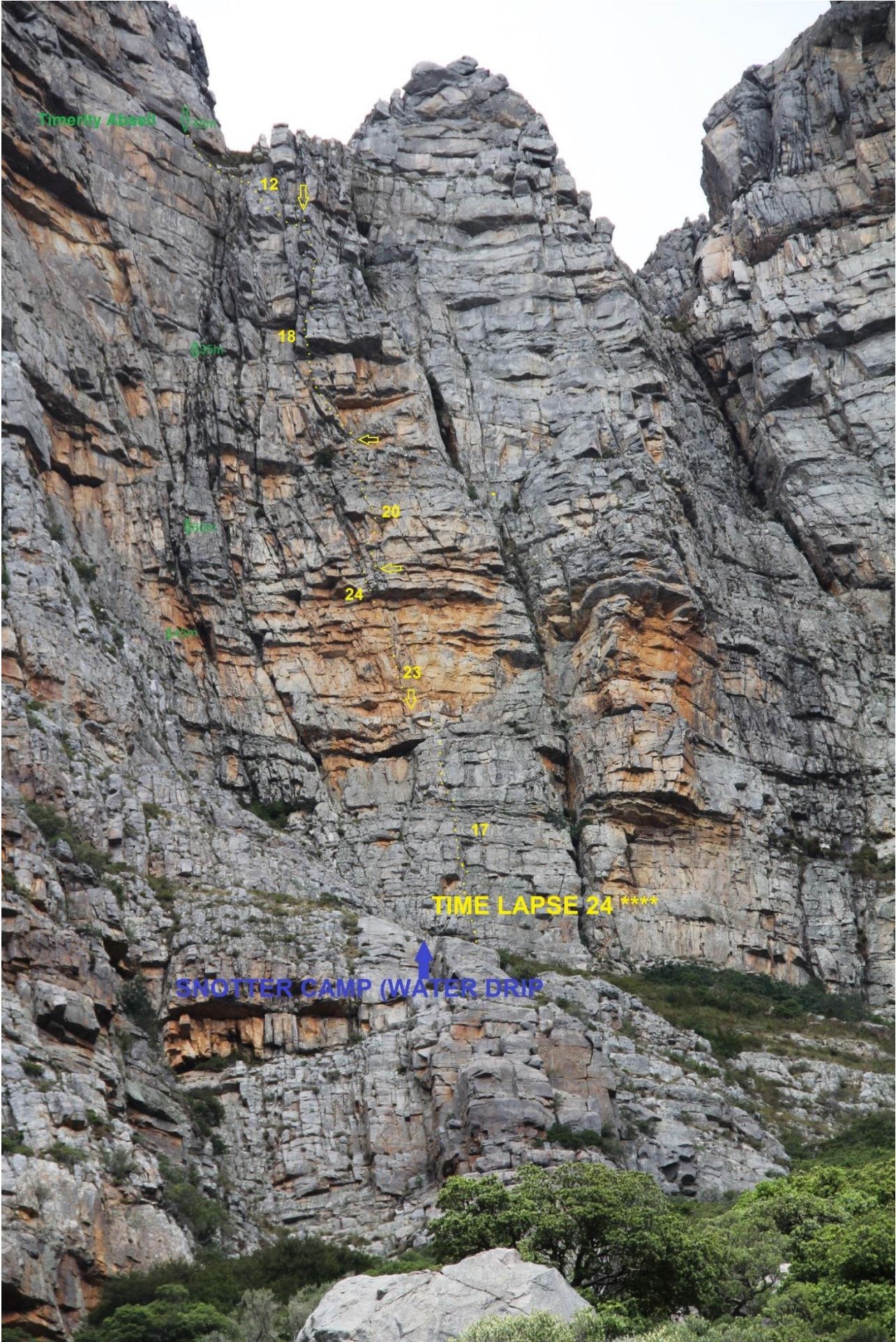
**DESCENT.** The ***Timerity abseil*** is about 30m to the left and easily visible.



***Brent Russel at the 2<sup>nd</sup> curx on the 4<sup>th</sup> Pitch of “Divine Time” 19. Photo C Edelstein.***



**TIME LAPSE 24 \*\*\*\*\***





So, when in a momentary lapse of reason you think all the decent new route possibilities have been explored, developed and refined on the East Buttresses, and especially the ***Divine Time Buttress***, along comes a ***“Time Lapse”***. The first pitch is again a quality 55m pitch on the grey rock that supports the overhanging yellow orange panel above. The second pitch has two cruxes of 23 and 24+ that yet needs to be led free with a tricky in-between section that is a little run-out. As at June 2017 this pitch had not been led on-sight free. The third pitch also has good climbing and the fourth is an airy and intimidating but easy crank through a gap in the massive “eye-brow” overhang to the left of Outrageous time. Easy climbing allows you to finish at the Timerity Abseil Bolts.

Credit must go to Adam Roff for pointing out the split in the overhang to the right of the ***Divine Time*** crux of the second pitch. I had considered this as an option previously but knew it would be really hard. And it is.

**Pitch 1:** 55m 17 Start a few metres right of the start of Play Time and head straight up to the right facing corner 20m above. Climb this halfway to where it gets grotty and swing left on to the arete. Continue up to the large blocky ledge system but move up and left to stance at the base of the yellow panel on a standing stance below the overhanging recess of the second pitch. (Your leader will appreciate you stancing there rather than lower down on the right).

**Pitch 2:** 30m 23 A0 (24) Place high gear off strenuous crimps and pinches and move up into the recess above. It then gets a little run-out but continue to the overhang. Climb the jamb crack with difficulty and stance on the right. (FFA still needed.)

**Pitch 3:** 25m 20 Climb straight up and crank through the overhang above to easier ground. Continue to the large ledge below the overhang. Be careful to avoid a large loose block than cannot be trundled as there is all the Snotter Camp below.

**Pitch 4:** 40m 18. Do an awkward move and attain the lichen covered ramp up on the left. Climb this on the left arete where the rock is clean and find your way up to the left side of the massive “Eyebrow” or ‘Cats Ears” overhang. Climb the slot on the left that is easier than it looks and the climb the right arete to a ledge quite high up.

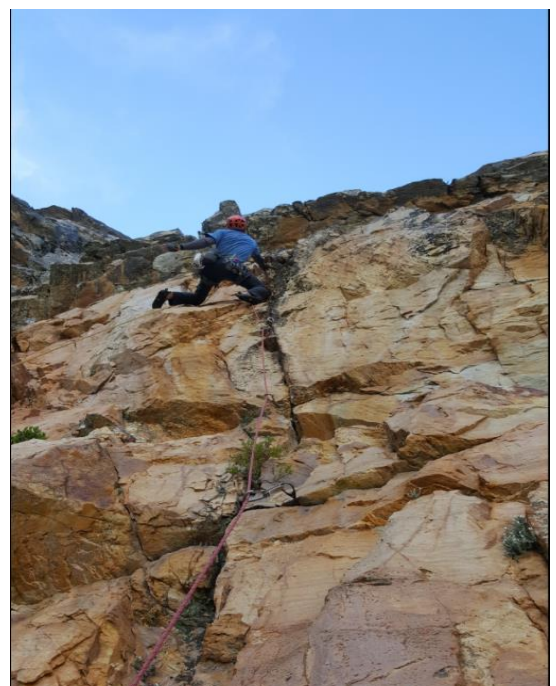
**Pitch 5:** 50m 12. Wander up and left to the gully and traverse line and belay off the Timerity Bolts or further back in the shade.

*FA C Edelstein and Brent Russel Nov 2016*



**Willem Le Roux 1<sup>st</sup> Pitch of Time Lapse**

**Willem on 1<sup>st</sup> 23 crux on 2<sup>nd</sup> pitch**







***Brent Russel following the final pitch on “Time Lapse”. Photo: C Edelstein Nov 2016***



## OUTRAGEOUS TIME (25) \*\*\*\*\*

A fun route that offers steep climbing and a proper crux. Starts about 25m right of the tea spot, just right of a small tree. A small cairn against the base marks the spot.

**Pitch 1** (21) 45m. Climb straight up, turning a little roof on the left at 20m. Continue straight keeping to clean rock to below a blank face at 35m. Make a move up the right facing corner and then step left onto a small arête. Continueto a comfortable ledge. Stance here.

**Pitch 2** (24/25) 25m. From the stance, climb diagonally left to the base of a steep orange recess. Strenuous moves past two fixed wires take you to easier terrain. Follow the crack for about five meters. A rising traverse to the right gains the face below a break in the roof. Climb up to the break, then crank through the roof. Step right to stance on the small ledge just over the lip.

**Pitch 3** (19) 30m. Head straight up to a large ledge 30m above. Pull through the steepest part of the midway bulge on excellent holds (in common with Divine Time).

**Pitch 4** (21) 40m. Climb the left-tending crack to easy ground. Continue straight up, turning the roof via the grotty, vegetated break (or do a long reach move on cleaner rock left of the break). Head 2m left to the start of a bottomless corner. Layback up the corner to a big roof (beware: loose rock). Power right along the rail and through the roof. 20m of easy ground puts you on a big ledge below a white, lichen-covered wall.

**Pitch 5** (22) 25m. Climb up the centre of the white, lichen-covered face to a ledge below a flaring, overhanging crack. Follow the crack to the top of the buttress.

Note: The crack is a little awkward to climb and hard to protect lower down.

**Descent:** Walk 50m left to the abseil line down Timerity. Three quick raps puts you back on the floor.

**Gear:** The route is protected with a standard rack (wires, Camalots, Aliens, a dozen slings and draws, 2 x 50m ropes)

*FA: Charles Edelstein, Richard Halsey, Adam Roff (pitches 1-4); Charles Edelstein and Willem le Roux (pitch 5) – November 2015*

*FFA: Willem le Roux and Douw Steyn – January 2016*

## TIME AFTER TIME 22\*\*\*\*\*

"Time after Time" gets its name from me being repeatedly surprised as to how the **East Buttresses** keeps on yielding excellent routes on good quality rock when one would have thought that all was said and done in the area. Despite this, a whole host of new routes have followed on from this.

Like all new routes it required a few ascents to refine it. On the first attempt with Robert Breyer in April 2014, the first pitch wandered around a bit as I thought the off-width at 15m would be desperate. The first attempt at the second pitch involved crossing over the gully on to the **Tea Time Buttress** but this was chossy, unprotected and dangerous to say the least.

I retreated from this and headed out left on to the gorgeous yellow and red face that is now home to some of the best climbing at Yellowwood including the second pitches of **Play Time, Divine Time, Time Lapse, Outrageous Time** and now **Time after Time**.

A circuitous path to the left and then back right makes for some very aesthetic climbing.

The third pitch is mind-boggling as it climbs with absolute ease, very steep and intimidating rock on big jugs and excellent gear.

The original fourth pitch was hard, complex and scary and was abandoned to be improved by crossing the gulley on to the **Tea Time Buttress**. Here it climbs a steep technical crack system and continues up the left arete of the buttress to finish up a tricky dihedral.

This route is as good and varied as any at Yellowwood.

**Pitch 1:** (55M) 19 Climb directly to the off-width and continue straight-up tending a bit left. At around 25m crank up into a short recess and then continue up the ramp to finish up a short left facing corner and stance on the good ledge.

**Pitch 2:** (35m) 20 Walk left past a bush and from the left side of the ledge climb carefully up to the right facing corner capped by the large roof. Do a tricky move left and then easily traverse left below the thin overhang to where it pinches. Pull through and then move back right just above the lip of the overhang across the red-yellow face. A good 2inch cam protects the crux and then climb diagonally to stance on a block directly over the original stance just left of the gully.

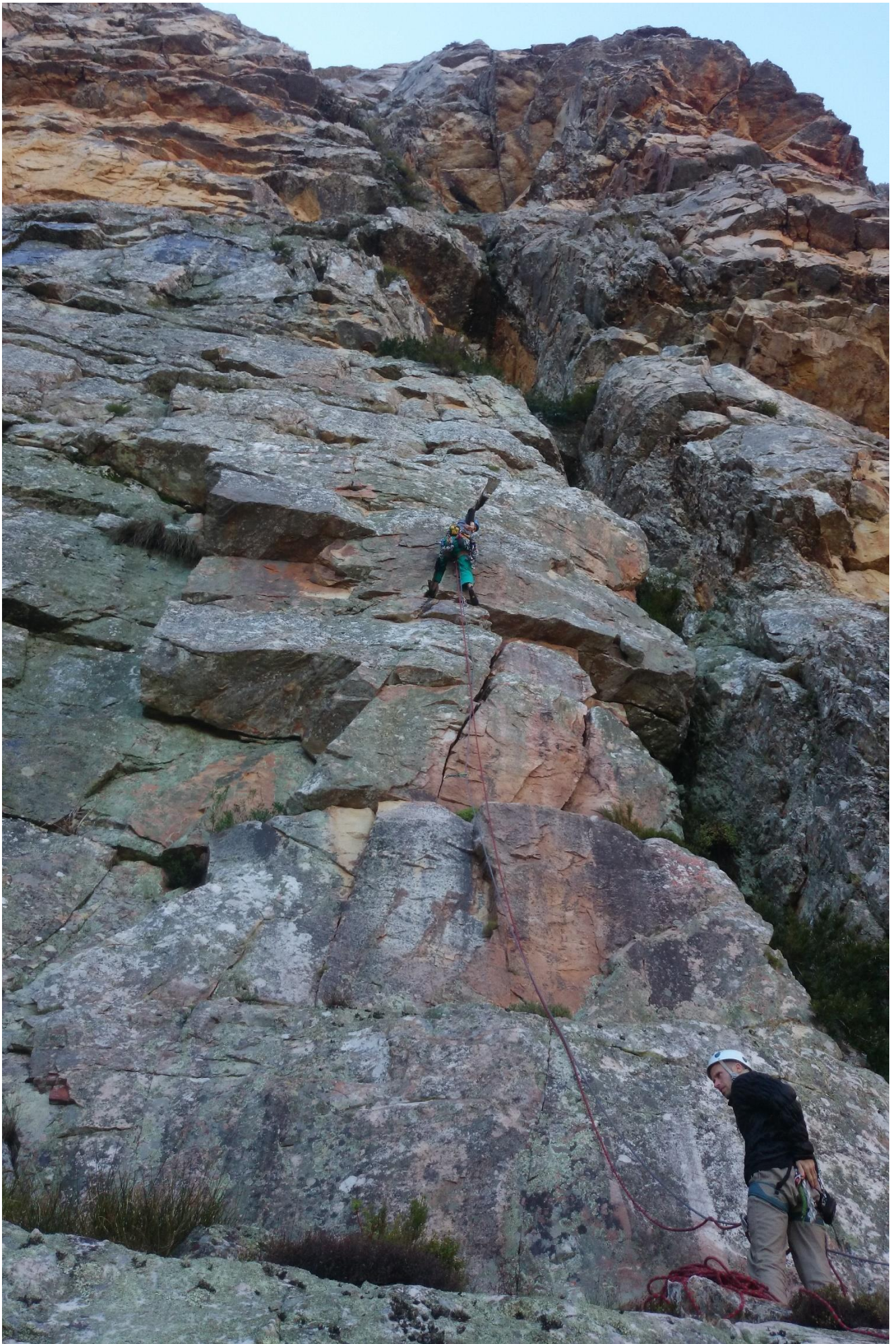
**Pitch 3:** (35) 16+ This is an extra-ordinary pitch. Move up under the overhang and traverse easily left to where it ends. The crank wildly on jugs and move out left on to a grey and white face. Continue jug hauling to where the angle eases. Cross the gulley to Tea Time Buttress and stance.

**Pitch 4:** (40m) 21. Climb the shattered appearing crack system just left of the chossy crack to a good ledge.

**Pitch 5:** (30m) 21+. Pull up on to the arete and continue till you can move left above the large roof system. Do tricky stemming moves to gain a left facing corner. Continue to the top.

First Ascent: Charles Edelstein and Robert Breyer. 16 April 2014





**Richard Halsey belayed by Douw Steyn on Time after Time first pitch 2014. Photo C Edelstein**





**Robert Breyer on following the second pitch of Time after Time on the first ascent. Photo C Edelstein**





**Richard Halsey and Douw Steyn on Time after Time 3rd pitch 2014. Photo C Edelstein**



## GOOD TIME 160m 21 \*\*\*\*\*

**Start:** The *Tea Time Buttress* is a 10 minute walk down to the left (east) of the main Yellowwood Amphitheatre and a minute or two from the drip or *Snotter Camp*. Start on a block just to the right of the gulley separating the *Divine Time* from the *Tea Time Buttresses* and left of a small tree.

**Pitch 1:** 30m 19. Climb up the front of the pillar with care. The climbing is probably only grade 18 but it is a bit run out. After 15m the ledge step right onto the arête. Continue on good rock to a stance next to a large block on the right and a yellowwood bush on the left.

**Pitch 2:** 20m 17. Crank directly up the rail and swing left above the yellowwood. (Hard grade 21 boulder move if you are short. Alternatively walk left over the yellowwood and crank up on to the arête on the left). Then head right for the arête and climb the cracks to a comfy ledge just left of a red corner.

**Pitch 3:** 20m 20 Do not continue up the corner but use the rail (hollow sounding) to swing right around onto the red face. Climb up 3m or so to an overlap and move right about 3 metres on a ledge system. Move up and then diagonal back left on gorgeous rock and then trend back right to the large overhang to stance just below the rail in semi-hanging stance.

**Pitch 4:** 10m 21+. If you get this right it is easy and really only grade 20. Place bomber gear in the rail out left and then rail through to get good excellent flakes on the lip. If you end up lying on your back with a foot out to the right on the overhang it is really only about 20. Stance just over the roof on a ledge so that you communicate with the second.

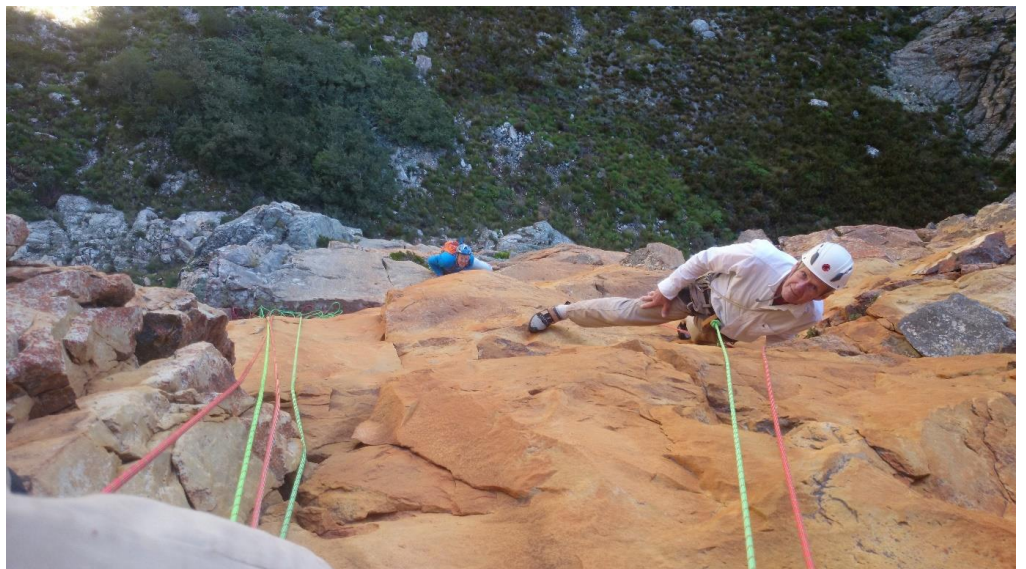
**Pitch 5:** 25m. 15 Climb up on juggy rock and then tend left to a large ledge. Hide behind a block in the shade if you are already in the sun.

**Pitch 6:** 55m 19. This is one of best grade 19 pitches anywhere. It is varied, safe and funky. Scramble up to the recess left of the obvious off-width crack on the right. Put out a small cam to the left of the crack but then do a slippery stemming move to left of the cam to the rail. Climb up and then step left into the recess. Climb this and continue up right past the large roof. Climb the flake and then continue up the right facing corner and follow the obvious line to a stance at 55m.

**Pitch 7:** 15m 19. Continue directly up – one tricky move – to the large ledge where you can belay in the shade.

**Descent:** Walk 70m or so carefully around left and horizontally along the ledge above the Tea Time Buttress, then over the Divine Time Buttress to the [Timery Abseil Point](#)

First Ascent: C  
Edelstein and Deon  
Van Zyl April 2014



**Tony Dick and Bruce Daniel on Pitch 3 of Good Time:** Photo C Edelstein





***Snort hanging out on the crux of Good Time: Photo R Halsey***

***Douw Steyn on the crux rail. Photo CEdelstein***



***Richard Halsey starting and finishing the crux of "Good Time" 21: Photo C Edelstein***





***Richard Halsey high up in the classic 19 pitch of “Good Time”: Photo C Edelstein***





***Snort following the classic 19 pitch of “Good Time”: Photo R Halsey***





**Adam Roff raving on “Good Time”: Photo Roger Natrass.**



## TEA TIME 160m 24 \*\*

The route ascends the first more or less free-standing buttress to the left of the main amphitheatre about 10 minutes down from the centre. It is a minute or two right of the [Snotter Camp](#). It serves up typical Yellowwood climbing with tricky gear placements and the odd bold move. The crux is an extremely thin rail that will be much harder for taller climbers. But it can be easily aided too.

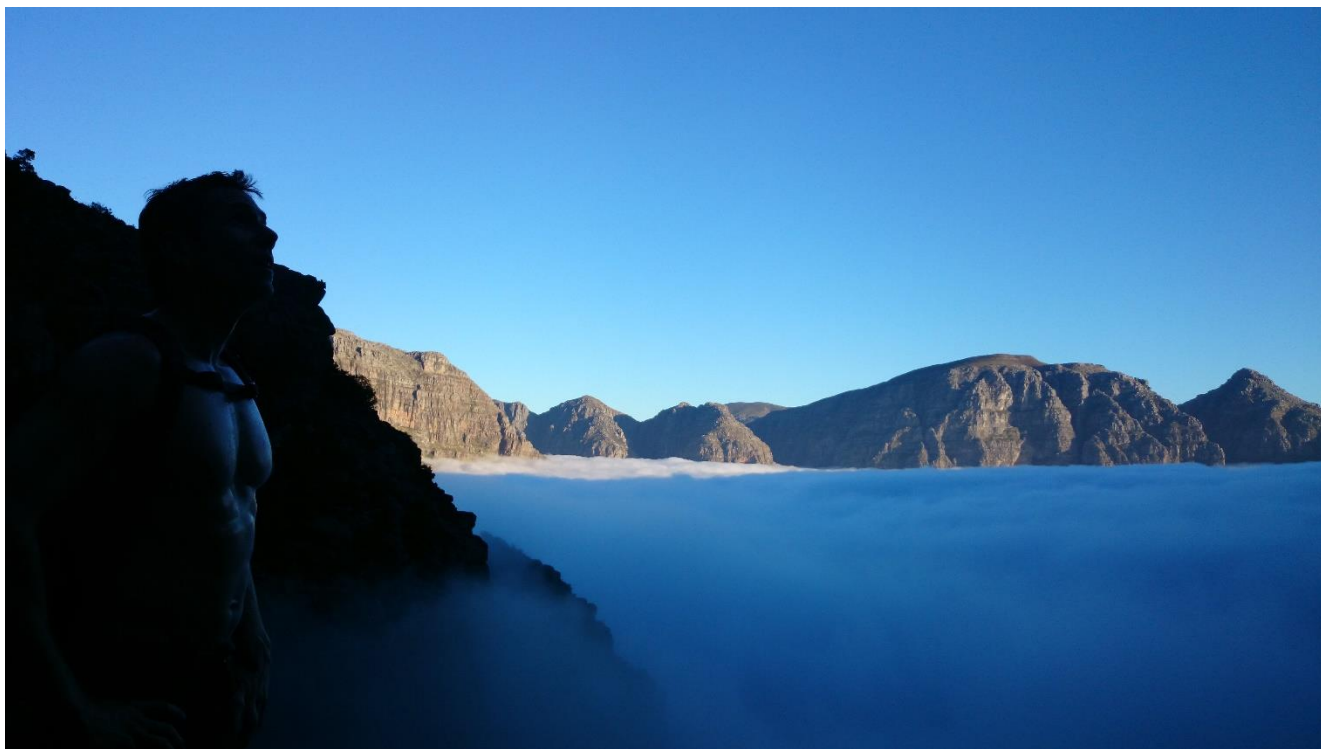
**Pitch 1:** 30m 21. Start at a stone cairn and climb deviously up the break to a large ledge.

**Pitch 2:** 20m 19 A0 or 24. Move left and climb up to the overhang on red and golden rock to the thin rail. There is a fixed nut in place to the right. **Good Time** goes out left. Move across the thin rail to jugs and continue up easy rock to stance. (Freeing the rail is up for grabs!)

**Pitch 3,4 and 5:** 110m 17. Climb to the top in 3 or 4 pitches on delightful climbing following the obvious crack line.

Descent: as for **Good Time** use the [Timerity Abseil Route](#). Walk carefully horizontally east (left) about 100m along the ledge system over the **Tea Time Buttress**, then over the **Divine Time Buttress** to the first bolted **Timerity Abseil Point**.

First ascent C Edelstein, Jonathan Hajos and Ilya Koll September 2011



**View from Yellowwood over du Toit's Kloof with Willem Le Roux March 2011:Photo C Edelstein**

## YELLOWWOOD CRACK 150m 14 \*\*

**Start:** Although the description below suggests starting at the base of the actual gulley it is better with cleaner rock to start left of the gulley on the rib.

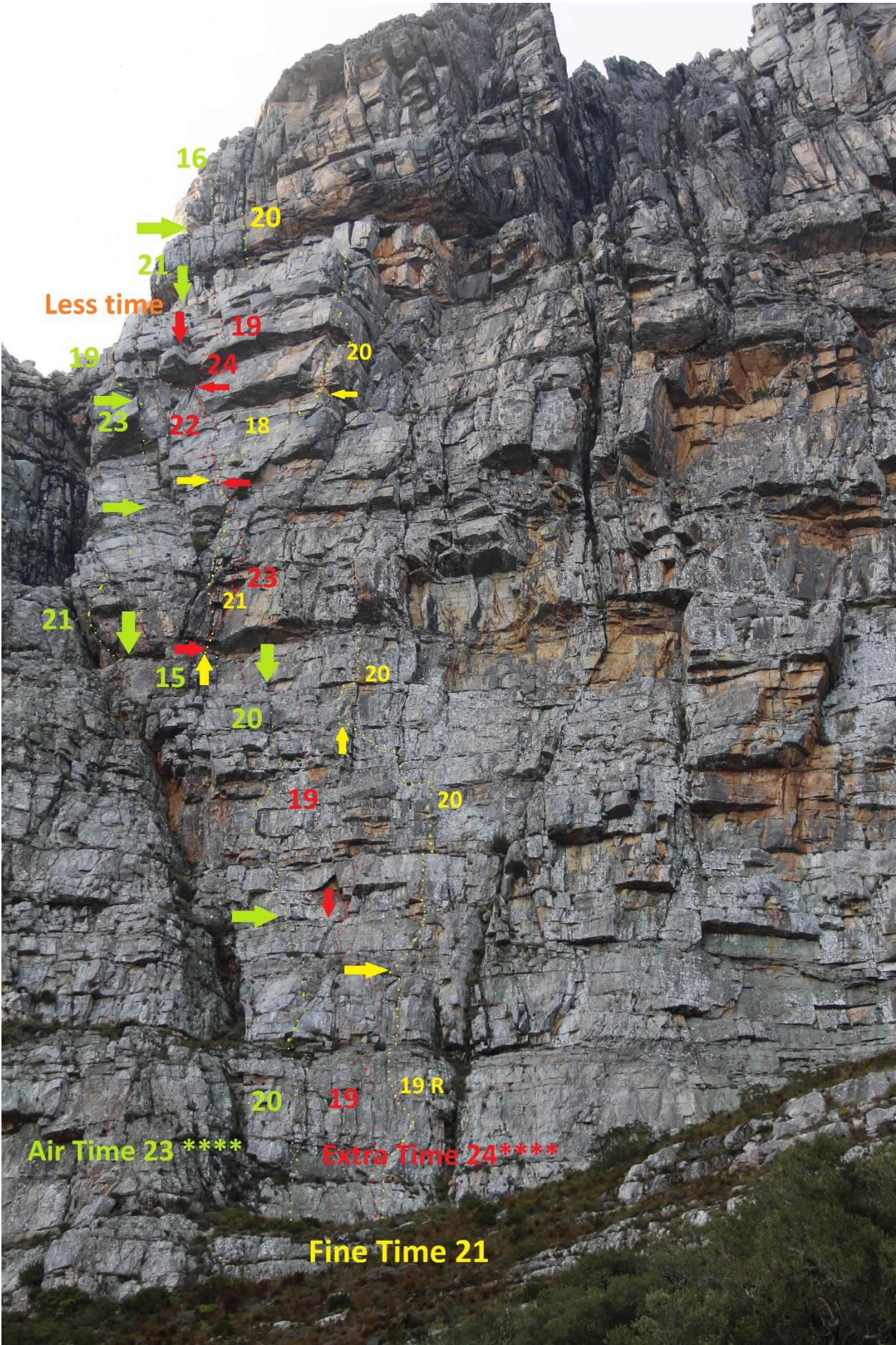
Yellowwood crack is user friendly and the easiest way to get to the top of the amphitheatre. It can be climbed by beginners led by an experienced climber. Helmets are essential. The route can be climbed in about 5 pitches. The first pitch is conventional easy "D" climbing. Getting through the next blocky overhangs is a bit tricky. But thereafter climbing the left rib is good clean easy rock. It can be very wet in winter.

(13) **Yellowwood Crack** is the right-hand member of two parallel cracks that form the only obvious line of weakness on the left-hand side of the 500-foot amphitheatre guarding the top of Yellowwood Ravine. There is a loose, dirty face at the bottom. The remaining pitches, nine in number, are attractive enough to make up for it and lie either in the crack, or on the rib to its left. The standard is good 'D'.

R. F. Davies and I climbed it in December, 1959, taking about 7 hours from the road.



**Air Time, Extra Time and Fine Time photo topo**





## AIR TIME 235m 23 \*\*\*\*

This route is just right of Yellowwood Crack and the outstanding feature is the large overhang on the 5th pitch. The overhang is climbed with nothing less than perfect hand jams and is well protected with cams.

**Pitch 1:** 45m 20. Start at the small cairn and scramble 5 metres to the overlap. Step up onto the cantilevered block and place a bomber green alien. Balance up the rail and move left to climb up the face. Continue up the more or less obvious line to stance just left of **Extra Time**.

**Pitch 2:** 45m 20. Climb up over dodgy flakes to a rail. Step left and climb up easily for a few meters. Place a good cam or two and do a crank up to a sloping hold and move left and up to the overhang. Climb diagonally up to the right to below another overhang. Rail under this on dodgy shattered rock to exit on the left. (**Extra Time** exits it on the right.) Climb the reachy dihedral to a stance.

**Pitch 3:** 20m 15. Walk left and climb the easy right facing corner to a ledge. Walk left past the starts of **Fine Time** and **Extra Time** 3rd pitches and then continue left to a stance in a cave by crouching along a narrow ledge.

**Pitch 4:** 30m 21. Climb up the left slanting chimney crack (good pro) until you are able to swing round onto the face. Climb bold moves up and right to the arete. There is a spike of rock on which you can place a sling for pro. Climb easily up the face to a decent ledge and stance.

**Pitch 5:** 25m 23. Climb easily up to the overhang and place some good cams. (Bear in mind that your second will curse you if you place them too deep!) Turn the overhang on perfect hand jams. Place a small cam on the right to keep the ropes from jamming in the crack at the lip. Continue up the corner to a large sloping stance.

**Pitch 6:** 25m 19. Step left and climb an impeccable recess to the "walk-off" ledge.

**Pitch 7:** 30m 21. Climb up onto the blocks on the right and with an awkward start climb the cracks to a ledge. Place a large cam and turn the overhang with a reach crank. Continue easily to the large ledge system.

**Pitch 8:** 45m 16.

Climb the grey weather rib just to the right of the gully until one can step across to the left wall. Continue on easy weathered grips to the top.

FA: C Edelstein, D Steyn, M Versfeld and W Le Roux January 2016.

## EXTRA TIME 24 160m \*\*\*\*\*

### with the option of "A Little Less Time" (22).

After the spectacular "find" of **Divine Time**, Deon Van Zyl aka "Snoekie" aka "Lulu" and I ventured back to Yellowwood and assembled – partly at least – another route that simply smacked of "classic" last week Wednesday in 36 C heat. (It was 30 C when we got to the car at 19h15 that day.) This is after Tini Versfeld and I contrived "**Fine Time**" (20) a week or so before. Yesterday, in near perfect conditions, we returned, but I had promised my pal Willis who has stiff arthritic hips and battles on eighteens to haul him up "**Divine Time**" and my plan was to send up Lulu with Squeaks to play on the overhang on the last pitch of this new route.



Deon in his wisdom/stupidity decided to trade my place with his and Squeaks and I went ahead to “finesse” the route which at this stage I thought would warrant the name “One More Time”. We had used the first pitch on ***Fine Time*** and I had yet to free on lead the dihedral on the 4th pitch as it was vegetated a week ago.

And then there was the overhang!

As a pre-amble Lulu and I went to the Ledge on Tuesday, the day before and climbed “Tweedle Dee” ostensibly grade 22. This crux pitch I have always found to be at my limit and pretty damn close for me to climbing Africa Arête (25). So I thought this would be a good “calibration” for me. It is of course – at my age – and Tony Dick would verify this, a fuckn’ stupid plan to climb a route at your limit and then without resting up, head off to “finesse” an even harder route the very next day!

So there we were. I fashioned an excellent first pitch separate from ***Fine Time*** which does not really have a move harder than 18/19 but is graded 20 because it is so busy and complex. The second pitch Squeaks modified on lead and I improved it on top rope further. The third pitch was also improved a little by climbing a bit right of the gulley in the upper section on steep brilliant crystalline grey rock. And I combined the face and flashed the classic dihedral on the 4th pitch to belay under the roof.

***Adam Roff on the classic dihedral pitch 22.*** Photo: C Edelstein 2014

I “graciously” then handed the sharp end to the “youth” who proceeded forth and went dangling out at the end of the overhang just to find the perfect sequence to crank through on bomb-proof gear.

So the beta is crank out to the lip, place the obvious cams. Reach right to a jug, reach the left hand up to the finger crack with left foot heel hooked under the roof if you are tall, - I mean less short. Or, cut free and heel hook in the slot if you are shorter or less tall. Follow the left hand now in the crack with right hand and lay back as it gets better and better.



The top pitch is just as problem solving as the rest of the route but really, also only 19.

This is a classic and like “Divine Time” really worth doing. If you can claim to climb grade 24 on sport or even 23 it is really worth playing on as the pro is so good. And I mean everywhere! It is so well protected that you can almost consider it a sport route on trad aka Sprad route. Having said that it is still at Yellowwood with all that makes it steep and intimidating if you are a newbie or wannabe there.

**Start:** View the topo on the photograph. The start is marked with a cairn.

**Pitch 1:** (19) 50m Climb the crack just left of Fine Time to a ledge system and then continue up left up the parallel cracks to a ledge system. Move a few metres left and climb the easy right facing corner to stance on large blocks below the huge recess above.

**Pitch 2:** (19) 50m Climb the short orange/red corner on the right carefully to place good gear and continue straight up 4 or 5m. Step left to above your belay and climb the white-grey recess to a ledge. Move a little left and diagonal across a small orange face and climb carefully past the blocks and dodgy looking flake. Lay-backing works well here and there is a slot up right for your right hand. That way you can completely avoid using the flake. Continue up to a ledge and continue straight up the next groove to the next large ledge. Walk left past the large blocks and climb up to the dassie ledge. There are various options to reach this ledge. The straighter version is more like 20 or you can walk further left to an easy corner.

**Pitch 3:** (23) 35m As for ***Fine Time***, crank into the recess and climb up tending right. Stem up the short right facing corner and then straight through the overhangs. Tend up left to share a stance with ***Fine Time***.

(The original route climbed the grotty looking recess at grade 21. Step up and place the gold Camelot or equivalent. Straddle carefully for 3/4m to find gear. Do not continue up right up the recess but step left into the steep left facing corner and continue up to easier rock to stand on a grey pillar on the right. Place good gear high up and lay-back steeply (21ish) up to the right to a ledge shared with ***Fine Time***.

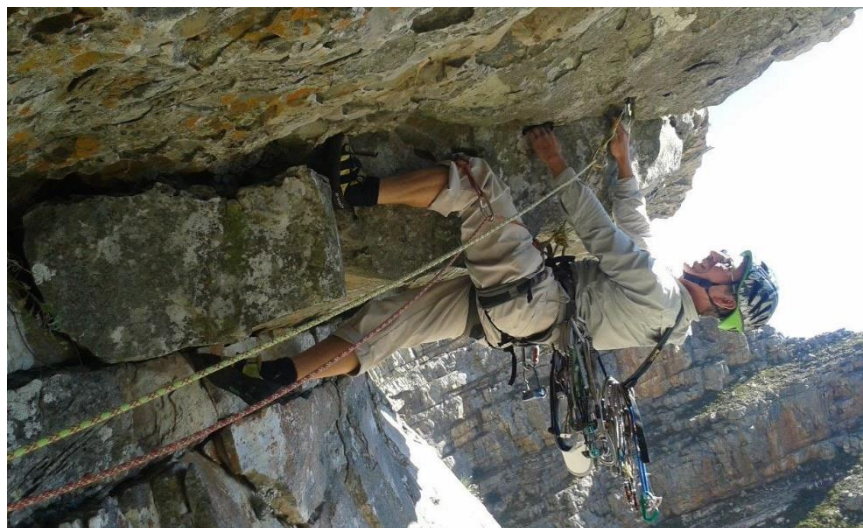
**Pitch 4:** (22) 30m Climb up the grey face first a bit left and then tending slightly right. At the rail move left to below the obvious left facing dihedral. Climb this and belay below the roof in a semi-hanging stance under the roof. Shady if the sun has got to you.

**Pitch 5:** There are two options:

(19) 30m ***"Less Time"***. Rail left and climb the recess to easier rock to the top.

(23/4) 12m ***"Extra Time"***. Rail out right and crank through the roof and continue up a few metres to a semi-hanging stance. (Do not combine with the next pitch.)

**Pitch 6:** (19) 22m. Move right and climb the left facing corner. Move back left and find your way to the top.



***Snort on the crux 24 pitch.*** Photo Adam Roff 2014

FA Less Time: C Edelstein, Deon Van Zyl February 2014 except Pitch 1

FA Extra Time including pitch 1: C Edelstein and Richard Halsey 12 March 2014

FFA Extra Time C Edelstein and Willem Le Roux 15 March 2014

**Descent.** Traverse horizontally above YW crack and along the top of the ***Tea Time*** and ***Divine Time Buttresses*** to the ***Timerity Abseil***





***Willem Le Roux on the 1<sup>st</sup> pitch of Extra Time. Photo: C Edelstein 2014***





***Johann Lanz belaying Snort on the 2nd<sup>nd</sup> pitch of Extra Time. Photo: Adam Roff 2014***





*Tini starting up the 4<sup>th</sup> pitch of "Extra Time". Photo C Edelstein*





***Johann Lanz cranking through the crux on Extra Time. Photo: Adam Roff 2014***





***Tony Dick on the final pitch of Extra Time. Photo: C Edelstein 2015***

## FINE TIME 21 200m \*\*\*\*+

**Start:** View the topo on the photograph. The route starts on the right of the "Extra Time" buttress.

**Pitch 1:** (19 R) 40m Climb easily up the ramp and find some "not so good gear" placements. Step up onto the face and do a tricky move up and slightly left. Climb more easily to a ledge (often a little damp). Climb the crack in the short left facing corner to a good ledge.

**Pitch 2:** (20) 40m Climb up rightwards past the triangular overhang to a ledge. Climb the steep face above (or the grey face right of the corner which is not as clean) to a narrow ledge. Move a few metres left and then climb the right facing corner and continue up to a good ledge.

**Pitch 3.** (20) 20m Climb up the face to under the thin overhang and pull through on the right into a steep crack. Climb to the "dassie" ledge.

**Pitch 4:** (21) 25m. Crank into the recess and climb up the left side and pass the overhangs on the left. (**Extra Time** climbs the right side - harder - and then straight through the overhangs). Move past the bush on the left to join the stance on **Extra Time** on a small but good ledge.

The original version climbed the grotty recess on the left (19).

**Pitch 5:** (18) 15m This and the next pitch can be combined. Climb up right on the clean grey face and head across the exposed face to below an overhanging crack.

**Pitch 6:** (20) 30m Climb the overhanging crack and turn the overhang on its right. Climb diagonally left to the arete. Climb this and then finish up the corner to the walk-off ledge.

**Pitch 7:** (20) Climb up the supporting pillars to the bulging overhang and crank through on funky moves to easier ground. Continue to a ledge. (You can walk off left from here.)

**Pitch 8.** (In progress – high wind thwarted Jimbo and Snort from completing the last pitch)

**Descent:** Walk horizontally left for about 150m along ledge systems all the way to the [Timerity Abseil](#).

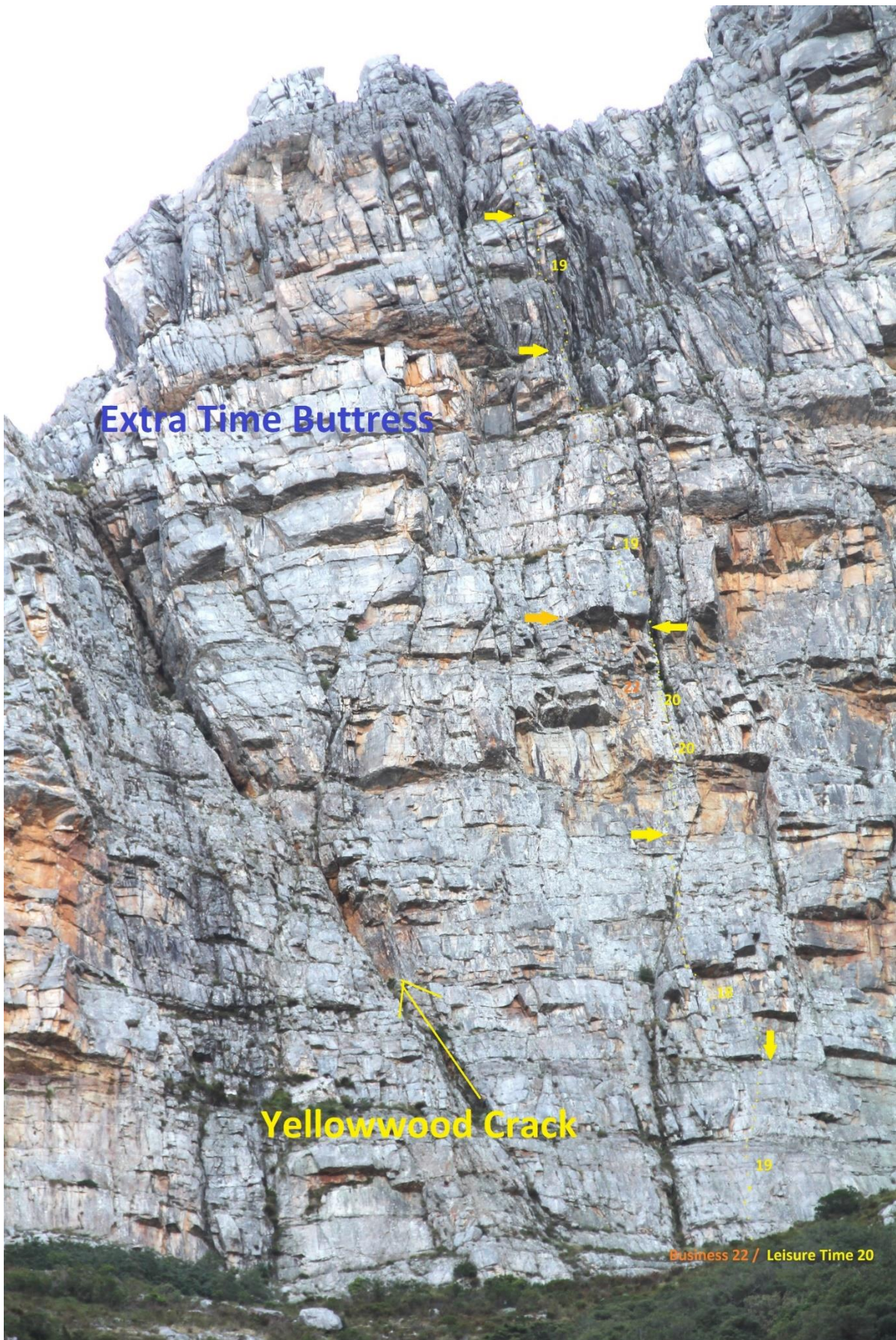
FA: C Edelstein and Tine Versfeld 23 February 2014. Assistance on improving the route by Adam Roff and Johan Lanz

FA: Pitch 7: C Edelstein and Jimbo Smith 2016



# BUSINESS AND LEISURE TIME 220M 22 or 21

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**Leisure Time** is the easier and direct version of **Business Time**. The route is destined to become a classic as it is one of the most direct routes at Yellowwood with varied, and interesting climbing, no stopper moves, mostly excellent rock and good protection. It is nevertheless, a full-service Yellowwood route with intricate, mostly on balance, climbing on the first two pitches. This is followed by a crank through the overhang on good jugs on the third pitch that then requires good balance and careful foot work to finish that pitch. The chimney attained is cool and not at all unpleasant (and not at all grotty despite its appearance from below.) The fourth pitch is steep but easy and the fifth pitch is burly but manageable with a cunning knee bar and hand jamb at the crux.

Most of the climbing is grade 18 and 19 and the 20 pitch on the direct **Leisure** pitch is well protected but classic Yellowwood climbing requiring focus and thought.

The **Business Time** 22 pitch is tricky and bold. Make sure you have a blue and or black alien for the crux.

**Start.** The start is between **Fine Time** and **Fun Time** halfway between the vegetated right tending crack system and a substantial bush.

**Pitch 1:** 40m 19. Climb up below a slight bulge from the ground and tend left. Step back right above the bulge and continue up the face to a thin crack that gets you to a narrow, undercut ledge. Move up and climb the right tending crack system to a good ledge and stance below the overhang on the right.

**Pitch 2:** 40m 18. Climb up just to the right of the overhang, up the corner for a bit and then left onto the arete. Traverse low along a rail to the right facing corner with blocks and up those to the overhang. Step left and then straight up on jugs. Continue up for a few metres and the cross over the chossy crack system just above the “dog-leg” and stance on a good ledge on the left.

**Pitch 3:** 45m 21. Move right a metre or two and crank up the middle of the face. Move to the right and up the crack till it becomes blind. Step right on to the face and continue up to the overhangs. Crank through the overhang to find a jug. Pull into the recess and do a few awkward moves up till above it. Carefully climb the face just to the right of the chossy gulley on the right to a stance in the chimney.

**Business Time** 22 heads right from the top of the recess and then does tricky moves up left on orange rock to a stance to the overhang. From there continue up to the halfway ledge.

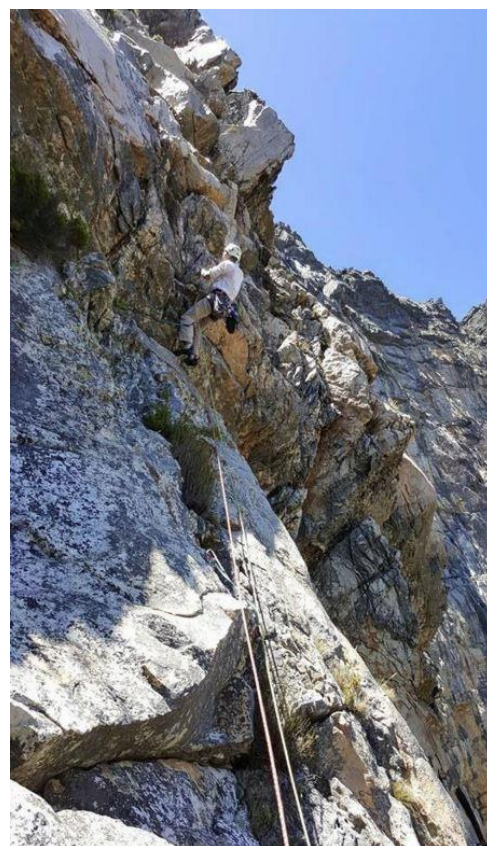
**Pitch 4:** 50m 19. Climb up the chimney and exit left where it makes sense. Then continue a bit further left and then crank wildly but easily up the juggy rock to a large grassy ledge. (**Halfway Ledge**). Don't stance here. Rather continue another 4m up the grey ramp on the left to a good stance.

**Pitch 5:** 30m 19. A bit of problem solving on the grey gnarly rock gets you up with lie back moves. Diagonal up and left and then back right into the chimney crack. (Knee bar and jamb). Continue straight up and left into a left facing corner or go right to the arete. Stance where comfy.

**Pitch 6:** 35m 19. Find your way to the right arete and bomb for the top.

First Ascent: C Edelstein and R Halsey December 2015.

(Pitch 3 and 4) C Edelstein and T Dick 9 January 2016



**Tony Dick age 68 on “Leisure Leisure Time Time” Dec 2016**

*Photo C Edelstein*



Fun Time 20  
\*\*\*\*

**START:** The route traverses in from the right along a ledge system and the start is marked with a cairn below a frictionless appearing off-width crack above.

**Pitch 1:** 30m (19). Traverse low below an overhang past a green bush and step down after 5m to end below a steep white face. Climb up the right facing corner and exit left above it to a small ledge with a bush.

**Pitch 2:** 35m (20). Climb directly up from the ledge past the thin crux. Continue to the large left facing corner and up this to a comfy ledge.

**Pitch 3:** 35m (20). Move right and do a tricky stem move in a grey groove and continue diagonally right to the large overhang. Lay back up and through the notch directly above the belay and continue diagonally right to the monster sized pillar and traverse to with your hands low at its base. Climb up to a small ledge and stance.

**Pitch 4 :** (17). 30m Continue up and right to a right facing corner (or climb the dark face to the left of the corner) and exit diagonally left to a large bushy ledge. Move up the ramp and exit the ledge on easy rock on its left and then pull through the bulge just left of the overhang. Climb diagonally back right on choss to a stance below shiny grey rock and left leaning cracks.

**Pitch 5:** 25m (17). Climb the crack system to the next ledge and stance.

**Pitch 6:** 25m (20). Climb the overhanging jam crack and continue up the steep crack and face to a stance on the right below a right facing corner.

**Pitch 7:** 40m (18) Climb the corner and continue past a short chimney crack above. Continue up the left facing corner crack or up the left slanting grassy cracks and exit left and then find your way to the top. Avoid the horrible off width by climbing around on the left.

**DESCENT:** Scramble to top of the mountain and then tend down the slopes to the left to the *Timidity Abseil*

FA: C Edelstein, F Davids and T Firman Summer 2009

FA Pitch 9 "Krakadouw" pitch C Edelstein and Neels Havenga 20 Jan 2010

### **Pitch Beta:**

Pitch 1. Be careful of the rock. Keep one rope straight.

Pitch 2. If you get scared you can step left after climbing 3 or 4 metres and avoid the crux.

Pitch 3. You can avoid the 21 crux that pulls through the gap in the overhang by walking around the left. At the massive cammed flake, traverse with your hands level with the base. Easy.

Pitch 4. From the stance climb the arête rather than in the corner. Easier and cleaner. Then you can climb the grotty gulley to the left or pull though directly above.

Pitch 5. Nothing special. Easy friction climbing

Pitch 6. The overhanging crack is well protected so go for it. You can avoid it by starting on the left and climbing up and right but that is a poor option.

Pitch 7. Climb the right facing corner to where it pinches and then continue up the left facing corner to its top and rail left. It is easier to step left above the pinch and diagonal up left up the grassy crack.





***Eye Candy at Yellowwood. Margaret Milne dressing up for Fun Time. Photo: probably C Edelstein.i***





***Robert Breyer and Deon Van Zyl about to start Fun Time: Photo C Edelstein 2010***





***Hector Pringle – silly grin on 2<sup>nd</sup> pitch (20) of Fun Time: 2010***





***Mark Straughan right hand cramping on the 2<sup>nd</sup> pitch of Fun Time. Photo: C Edelstein 2010***





***One just has to take this head shot. 2<sup>nd</sup> pitch of Fun Time 2010. Photo. Stewart Middlemiss***





**Hector Pringle practising anchor building and Snort thinking. “why me?”** Photo Stewart Middlemiss





**The “Mayor” in his office. Snort doing some admin at the start of pitch 3 on Fun Time 19.  
Photo Stewart Middlemiss February 2011**





Margaret Milne snacking atop pitch 2 Fun Time: Photo C Edelstein 2010





***Kevin Smith setting off on the 3<sup>rd</sup> (19) pitch of Fun Time: Photo Stewart Middlemiss February 2011***





***Charles Snort Edelstein cranking pitch 3 (20) Fun Time. Photo: probably Robert Breyer***





***Andrew Porter finding an alternative to pitch 3 on Fun Time: Photo Stewart Middlemiss***





**Deon Van Zyl getting the move round the rock pillar wrong. Pitch 3 Fun Time. Photo: probably Robert Breyer**





***Kevin Smith cruising up the 7<sup>th</sup> pitch of Fun Time (16). Photo: Stewart Middlemiss***





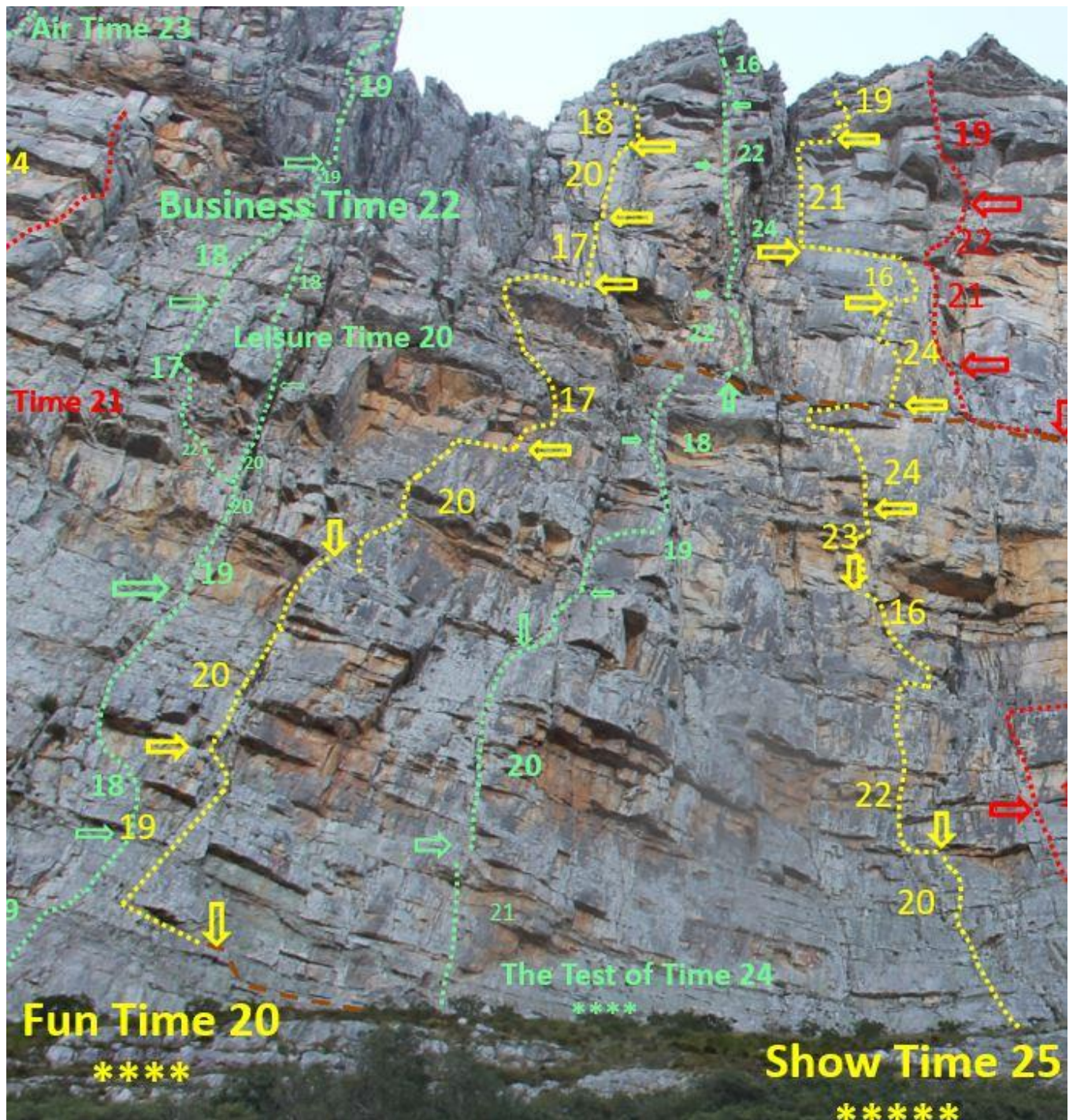
**Stewart Middlemiss leading the five star Krakadouw pitch on Fun Time.** Photo: Kevin Smith 2010



**Stewart Middlemiss philosophizing over a beer. Pays to climb with longs at Yellowwood.** Photo: Kevin Smith 2010



## TEST OF TIME 240m (24) \*\*\*\*\*



**Approach:** The route starts about 30m right of **Fun Time** and left of **Newborn** and **Show Time**. View the photo topo to find the detail of the start. Scramble a few metres up to ledge. The start is marked by a cairn of stones.

**Pitch1:** 20m 22. Climb up 3 metres to a small overlap. Crank through this and continue straight up to a small yellow recess with a jamb crack on its left. Crank through this and continue to the overhang with the obvious bush. Crank through and stance on a good ledge.

**Pitch 2:** 40m 20. Climb up the corner for a few metres and then step right on to the clean face. Continue to a rail and climb the obvious crack system which is grotty in places. After about 30m climb the crack till it gets vegetated and then step right onto the face and climb clean rock to a good ledge.



**Pitch 3:** 45m 19. Climb the recess on the right and step onto the face at the level of bush about 5m up. Continue to the dark grey face and traverse right across it low down. Pass the overhang on the right and climb the ramp to a good ledge.

**Pitch 4:** 20m 16. Continue straight up to the halfway ledge and belay at the pillar block on its right.

**Pitch 5:** 25m 22+. Climb up on the pillar block and place high gear. Move right round the corner into the recess. Climb this to a good ledge and belay in the corner to the left under the overhang in the shade.

**Pitch 6:** 25m 23+ . Pull straight up to the overhang to pass it on the right. Continue up diagonally left on to pillar blocks till they run out. Rail left and find yourself below a steep recess. Climb the recess (crux). Tiny cam is useful but there is good pro to the right. Stance on a grey weathered ledge system above the recess.

**Pitch 7:** 25m 22. Climb the left facing corner to the overhang and exit on the right to a ledge.

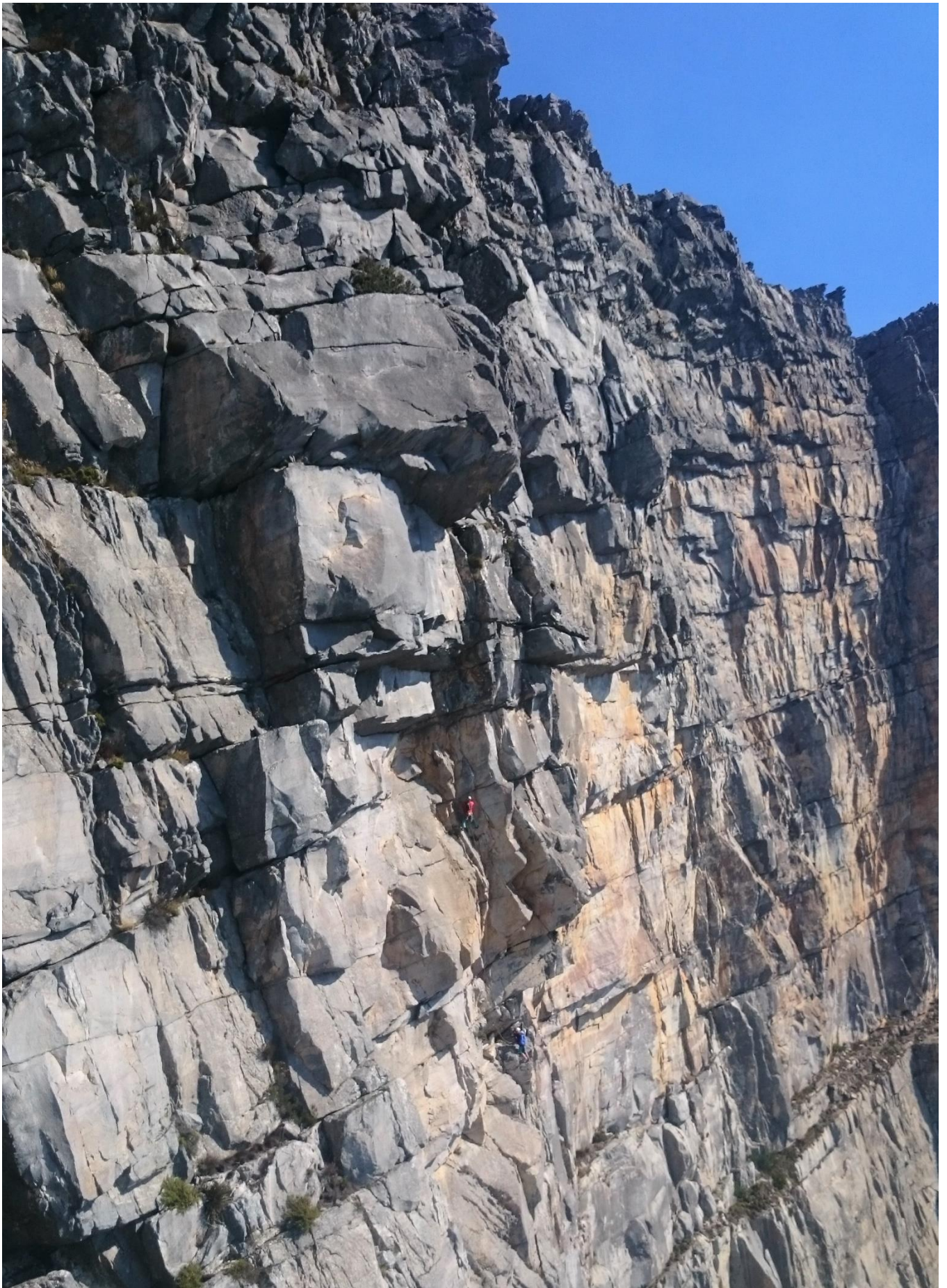
**Pitch 8:** 35m 16. Climb the obvious off-width crack and continue to the top.

**Descent:** Walk down to the left to the ***Timerity abseil point***. (10 minutes)

FA Charles Edelstein and Richard Halsey November 2015

FFA Charles Edelstein and Richard Halsey 17 February 2016





***Jimbo Smith belayed by Nadine Methner on the stellar penultimate pitch (22). Photo C Edelstein  
February 2017***







**Snort following the crux 23+ pitch on Test of Time on the FA. Photo: Richard Halsey**



**Snort starting off on 22 pitch on Test of Time on the FA. Photo: Richard Halsey**



## SHOW TIME: 260m 25\*\*\*\*\*

Deon Van Zyl and I did the usual by carefully racking up house points and as gently as possible slinked out of our respective beds at 04h30 in the morning some day early in 2010. Margaret, my gorgeous, delicious and very sexy wife, and I sleep curled up far closer than any sardines in a can and there is no sunflower oil to decrease any friction between us. So, to disengage from this embrace takes some very cunning maneuvers in the dark without collateral damage. But it seems that for once I succeeded.

I did not set off the security alarm managing to bypass all the appropriate beams correctly and the dogs did not bark. I escaped with minimal disruption to the household. The only problem is that I could not find the coffee drip filter holder so I had to do a McGuiver trick by placing a filter bag in a plastic bag with a hole in it. Of course, Margaret also did not find it and smugly told me later she used the fancy coffee machine we have. The device makes a noise like a high speed train trying to brake with a rusty braking system just before it is about to crash into a car at a level crossing. Indeed, if I had used the coffee machine or even ground the coffee which I had the fore-sight to do the night before, I would have been banished from the marital suite and had a restless night trying to do the sardine thing with one of my kids who would have nothing of it. Thus, the first and hardest crux of going trad climbing at Yellowwood was done. Solid grade 27 – my limit.

My good mate Deon Van Zyl who had been very grumpy just 13 days previously, and who had lied to his friends and to himself that he would never set foot on Yellowwood again was probably facing similar challenges but he also managed to escape relatively unscathed from the clutches of his loving and caring partner.

We met at 05h00 at the N1 city MacDonalds. (He got there first and under these circumstances you never can be late for your rendezvous or you won't find climbing partners again). And next stop was the base of Yellowwood amphitheatre. It was forecast to be cooler than the day before which got to 39 degrees C in Cape Town, about the warmest it ever gets here. 30% thundershowers were in the offing. We carried lots of water and drinks, around 9 litres between us, and the walk as always seemed longer and harder and definitely hotter than the previous time. I know this because I dripped sweat onto my specs before the first pylon and this usually only happens much higher up.

We drank and stashed some of the water about a 1/3 of the way up and ended up with spitting rain at the base. Tea, rack up, ropes flaked and Deon led off up the ramp pitches on a fairly obvious line I had spotted starting a few metres left of **Newborn** going diagonally left to join the crack system climbed by the Spanish dudes in December. It started raining properly and I had brought a Gortex rain jacket. Deon whimpered a little but managed to belay under an overhang which kept him sort of dry.

I followed the pitch and then it was my turn. It started raining again in earnest and easy grade 18 climbing became run out, scary and desperate. I hung around and fiddled waiting for the rain to stop and it did. Phew. I got to the next stance which was also an overhang and the rain abated for the rest of the day.

The next pitch moved left to a grotty looking crack with an undercut start and no pro. I shimmied myself across and after thrutching around found a runner placement and headed up. The climbing was technical because of the vegetation and dirt but not unpleasant and Deon was instructed to clean off all the muck which he duly did. He then gleefully informed me that all my difficulties were in vain as the crack yielded good pro and holds after the cleansing. Oh well.



The next pitch was very steep and overhanging and again the cracks were filled with dirt and grass which I could not clean without aiding. This led to easier climbing to a nice stance below a very overhanging scary pitch with a terrifying flake about 5 metres up.

Deon followed practicing aiding and then something memorable happened. Because of the hot weather we had decided to haul a bag with lots of water and kit with a separate rope that was tied to a gear loop on Deon's harness. Despite the rope being carefully flaked it decided to roll off the ledge as he was climbing and yanked off the haul bag that then took a fall factor 2 for 40m or so. The gear loop held, things broke up in the haul bag but not our water or the cokes!

I tried climbing the pitch and but could not even place the first decent piece of gear before being dragged down by gravity. It was very hot by now and no breeze. I abandoned the rack, selected some pieces and managed to place a dodgy RP 3 and an alien in a flared crack. I retrieved the rack and gingerly aided up to a good placement and then tested the scary flake which in fact seemed well keyed in. I was psyched out by now and aided up to easier ground and then did some wild moves through an overhang to gain a stance.

Deon had honed his aiding skills on the previous pitch and joined me in good time.

We abandoned our line and headed for the crack system on the left – the Spanish route. I got myself into trouble by rushing into a mega run out and with very poor gear did a very tricky move. I continued to an overhanging chimney and headed back to where our line was. This passed under a roof and I found chalk marks on the way. The climbing was not very challenging and my head was in the shade which was a great relief. Halfway along the rail I placed a good cam and lo and behold there was an 8mm bolt and hanger. It was so incongruous. WTF.

I clipped it anyway so Deon would notice it and continued up a grotty crack where a dodgy peg was to be found. I avoided the upper half of the crack and climbed clean rock by traversing left and then to the stance on the half way ledge.

We had had enough. We rapped **Down Time** and did the tea thing and walked down.

Mandatory beers were quaffed at Du Kloof Lodge and then on home to our very forgiving families. On the way down or perhaps on the route Deon gave me one of the most inspirational and motivating compliments ever. He said that he did not realize how good I was at fashioning new routes and especially at Yellowwood. This is from a guy who had hated being on Yellowwood just a few days before, had lost his cool on more than one occasion on that trip and of course I had lost my cool with him.

This time he carried up and down more than I did. He had kept his cool in much worse conditions despite his shoes killing his feet and no doubt will be back sooner rather than later. Despite the complimentary words he used, what I am sure he meant is that he was also inspired and motivated and this has proven true over the last 4 years since that effort. He has since on-sighted the rail pitch on Roulette which I still consider a serious 'head' route

Unfortunately, Deon was not available for my next attempt at completing the route, but Willem Le Roux came along and we managed to complete the route with some falls and dogging. Willem led the 1<sup>st</sup> pitch and the





***Willem Le Roux at the second crux of pitch 2 (22) Show Time Photo: C Edelstein February 2012***

Pitch 4 is really complex and hard to read and Willem took a fall but did work it out. I managed to follow it free but only just.





***Willem Le Roux at the crux pitch 4 (24) Show Time.*** Photo: C Edelstein Feb 2012

Pitch 5 stumped us but we left it for another time to sort out.

We returned again in 2012 and Willem failed again on pitch 5 and I struggled on everything!. This time we did not top out as we saw no point in continuing.





***Willem facing disappointment yet again on his nemesis pitch 5 (24) off the half-way ledge of Show Time: Photo: C Edelstein 2012***

In 2013 we brought a secret weapon. The inimitable Douw Steyn.

We all failed dismally. I failed on pitch 2, Douw failed on the crux of pitch 4 and Willem got spat of again on pitch 5.

The saga continued:

Then in 2014 Willem and I had another go and again, pitch 5 chucked Willem off although we managed the earlier pitches. I knew though, that the route was in the bag – I had managed to free all the hard pitches on top-rope!

We again did not top out.

On Saturday 28 March 2015 I slunk out of the house at 05h00 and raced to Willem's House by 05h30. Walk, tea, rack, ropes.

It was ***Show Time!***

Willem led the 1<sup>st</sup> pitch. I followed. All good.

I led my nemesis pitch 2 and styled through it.

Willem hiked the boulder problem start on pitch 3 and made it to the hanging belay with aplomb.

It was hot! I was nervous.



Pitch 4 starts with a corner to a roof. Then there is an obvious foot hold on the arête far right that is very difficult to get to if you are short. 3,4,5 tries and then a desperate balance move got me round.

Up to the overlap I crimped.

Gear placed from the knee bar including the shallow green camelot!

Then the real crux followed that entails a desperate lunge for a polished sloper high on the left. "Stick it" I tell myself besides the fact that there are no real foot holds. There is no friction other than a smearing with my right knee. Another lunge with the right hand to something.

And through!

Willem started pitch 5 as the sun got to us and it was very hot. He climbed the awkward recess to the crux carefully and slowly milking every rest on every hold. He had failed on this pitch no less than 5 times! Rail left, blue alien, clip tat, lay back and up he went smoothly, easily and with no fuss.

I followed finding it surprisingly easy.

He then led the 16 as I had done it before.



***Willem Le Roux on pitch 6 (16) of Show Time April 2010. Photo C Edelstein***

Then I led the the long superb 21 pitch which had spanked me the first time. Same process: Deliberate, slow, methodical, inching up, milking every rest on every hold.

Done.

And then the final pitch which Willem straightened with a fine harder finish.



Time to brag and boast and gloat.

We did it. We finally completed the First Free Ascent of **Show Time**.





**Approach:** Show Time starts left of centre of the main Yellowwood Amphitheatre about 7 metres left of the start of Newborn. The first few bolts of Newborn are visible from the base of the wall and the start of **Show Time** is marked by a small cairn of stones adjacent to a small flat clearing used as a bivvy spot.

**Pitch 1:** 50m 20 Climb easily up the grey slabs for about 30m just left of a vague recess and past an overhang. Head up right to the grey face and climb the shallow left facing corner and continue up to the overhang capping the red-orange rock. Move left to a ledge. (Find a good small cam placement in a pocket on the face above the ledge.)

**Pitch 2:** 55m 22 S2 Move to left end of the ledge and step across the void to below a crack that can be vegetated. The crack does take good pro if cleaned. Continue up to and the past the large overhang on its left and climb the left facing dihedral to a large ledge on the right. Climb the overhanging strenuous gnarly looking crack for about 10m to a ledge system. Move left 2m and climb the left facing corner starting at a thin flake plastered against the wall on the left. Continue easily up the orange left facing corner to the grey overhang and pass it on the right. Semi-circle up and right to avoid the very steep crack in the white rock (climb it if you are bold and strong). Head easily up and left to a right facing corner system on yellow rock topped by a robust bush to a stance. With 50m ropes, stance 5m lower on a decent ledge, then scramble up the corner system to start of pitch 3.

**Pitch 3:** 20m 23 (Don't be tempted to combine pitch 3 with any part of pitch 4. It will be very tiring and you may run out of gear, communication and end up in a crappy hanging stance anyway!)

Strenuous climbing past an inverted 1" cam placement brings you to a juggy rest. Continue up to the overhang and the move right on the gnarly rock to pass the roof on the right. Continue up a few meters to a hanging stance under the overhang.

**Pitch 4:** 48m 24 If you are lucky and you manage to work out the best way to climb this pitch, then it is probably only grade 23. Climb the left facing corner to the overhang. Step right onto the arête and clip the fixed wire if you wish. Continue up past the small overhang to easier ground. Continue straight up for 4m or so and then move left about 3m. Do not climb the obvious white recesses but climb the grey rock bulge between them directly above the bomber rock 1 placement (only grade 19) to a large rail under the overhang. You can place a large cam on the right to protect your second but the rail generally is at least size 4.5 Camelot. Rail all the way left easily to the grotty corner and climb it. Or keep moving left on a clean rail to circumvent it. Climb up to the (halfway) ledge and clip a bolt left there by some Spanish climbers and stance right there so you can see your second. If you did not find pro in the large rail for your second then move all the way back right to stance above that point so your second is protected with a more vertical rope. (Sounds complicated but will be evident when you are there.)

**Pitch 5:** 24 35m. Lie back the grey flake on the left and continue up the brittle recess until the holds run out. (There is good pro but the holds seem very dodgy). Step out left on to the arête on good rock and continue to the small overhang. Compose yourself on good holds. Continue straight up if you are bold and strong or move left 3m and climb the crack into a shallow recess past a "nice-to-have" thread that is in situ. Continue up about 10m and rail right to a good ledge.

**Pitch 6:** 30m 17 It seems sensible to climb straight up but there is no pro and it is tricky indeed. So, move right 3m and climb the easy recess for about 5m. Then climb diagonally back left above the stance to the obvious rail capped by an overhang. Rail easily all the way left to a good ledge at the base of the right facing corner. Peter Robbins and Clinton Martinengo climbed through overhang to join **Blood is Sweeter than Honey** (2016).



**Pitch 7:** 35m 21 Climb the corner that is vegetated in places for 30m to where it steepens. Climb the steep overhanging crack till you can rail 3m right to a good ledge. (This pitch has really good climbing despite the chossy appearance.)

**Pitch 8:** 40m 19 Climb up to the overhang past the right side and then up easy blocky climbing to a rail system. Move right about 10m and avoid the first left facing yellow-orange recess. Continue to the next grey one and climb up it. Head easily diagonally up left to a grey overhanging crack and crank through this to top out.

Enjoy the view.

## DESCENT:

Head east (towards Rawsonville) to the **Timidity Abseil** 10-15 minutes. Keep going downwards past the largest gully (**Yellowwood Crack**) and then head north-east for the furthest and lowest gully. You will eventually see cairns leading you to the gully.

## GEAR:

50 or 60m ropes. 60m ropes are safer in case you have to bail using **Down Time**. But you can escape down **Newborn** with fifties.

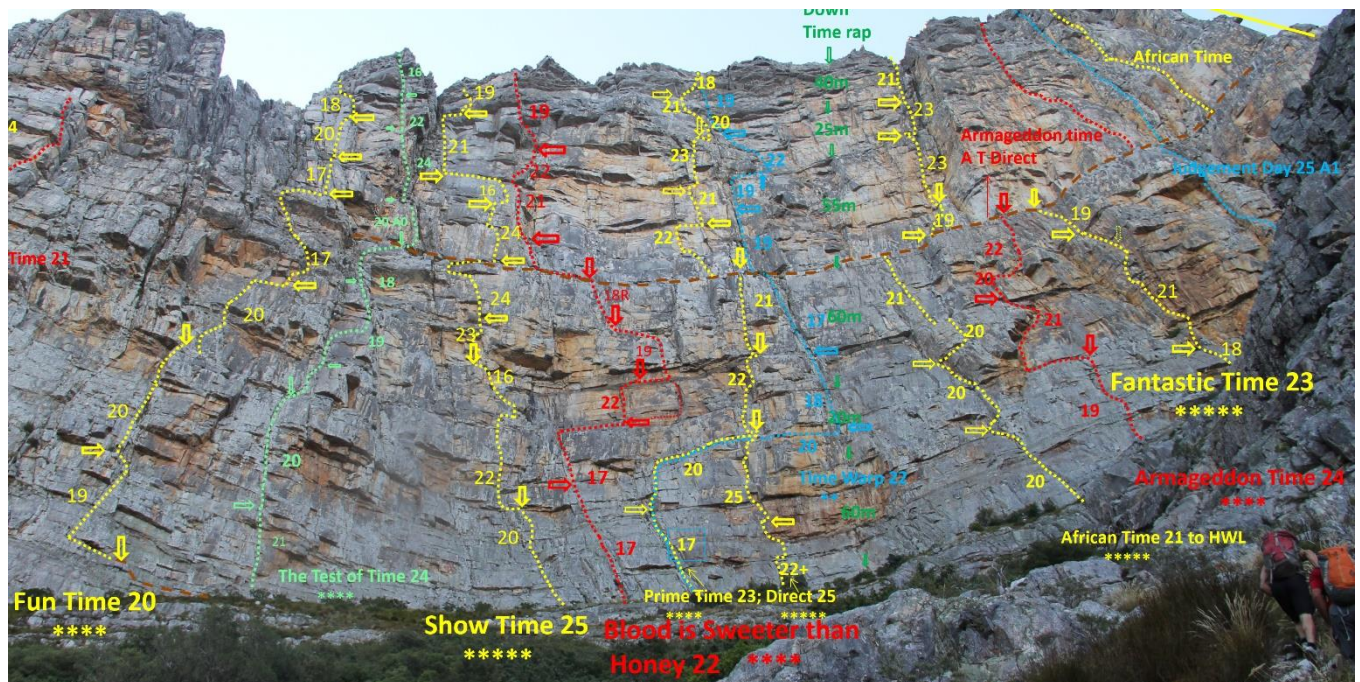
Doubles on cams to 1,5 inch is recommended. Single set nuts to size 10 or 12. . 4 QD's 10 Slings or 8 Slings and one very long sling is useful. No RP's required.

First attempt to halfway ledge: Charles Edelstein and Deon Van Zyl March 2011

First complete ascent: Charles Edelstein and Willem Le Roux April 2011

Further failed attempts by Charles Edelstein and Willem Le Roux in 2012, 2013 with Douw Steyn and 2014.

FFA: 28 March 2015 Charles Edelstein and Willem Le Roux



## GENERAL

New Born is the only sport route at Yellowwood (as of 2009). It was originally bolted by Sean Maasch in the nineties. Jeremy Samson added more bolts in 2007 and opened the route with Jimbo Smith in 2009.



The route is in the sun from about 11h30. It gets really hot once the sun hits. Rock quality is generally excellent. The route has not seen much traffic, so there are still some hollow flakes, precariously balanced rocks and vegetation around.

All stances have bolted belays. Bolts are spaced on easy ground, but close when the climbing gets harder. The first two pitches can be combined to save time. The third and fourth pitches can also be combined, but bear in mind that pitch four ends at a hanging belay. All other pitches finish on comfortable ledges. No pitch is longer than 30m, some are much shorter.

## GEAR

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You'll need a 60m sport rope and 18 draws to climb and descend Newborn to the halfway ledge (will update once the upper pitches have been explored).

## ROUTE

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The route starts approximately 20m right of Show Time. Two large, white boulders mark the spot at the base of the cliff.

**PITCH 1 (17):** Easy climbing over gentle ground. Watch out for loose rock.

**PITCH 2 (19):** Short, easy pitch. Can be combined with the first pitch.

**PITCH 3 (25):** Thin crux section, then easy climbing to a ledge.

**PITCH 4 (23/4):** Short pitch with sustained, technical climbing.

**PITCH 5 (27):** Traverse right from the stance to skirt the first roof. Blast past two more overlaps and up a delicate corner the stance. Pack's a punch.

**PITCH 6 (26/7):** Tricky face climbing leads to an open book and easier ground. The first move is hard for shorties.

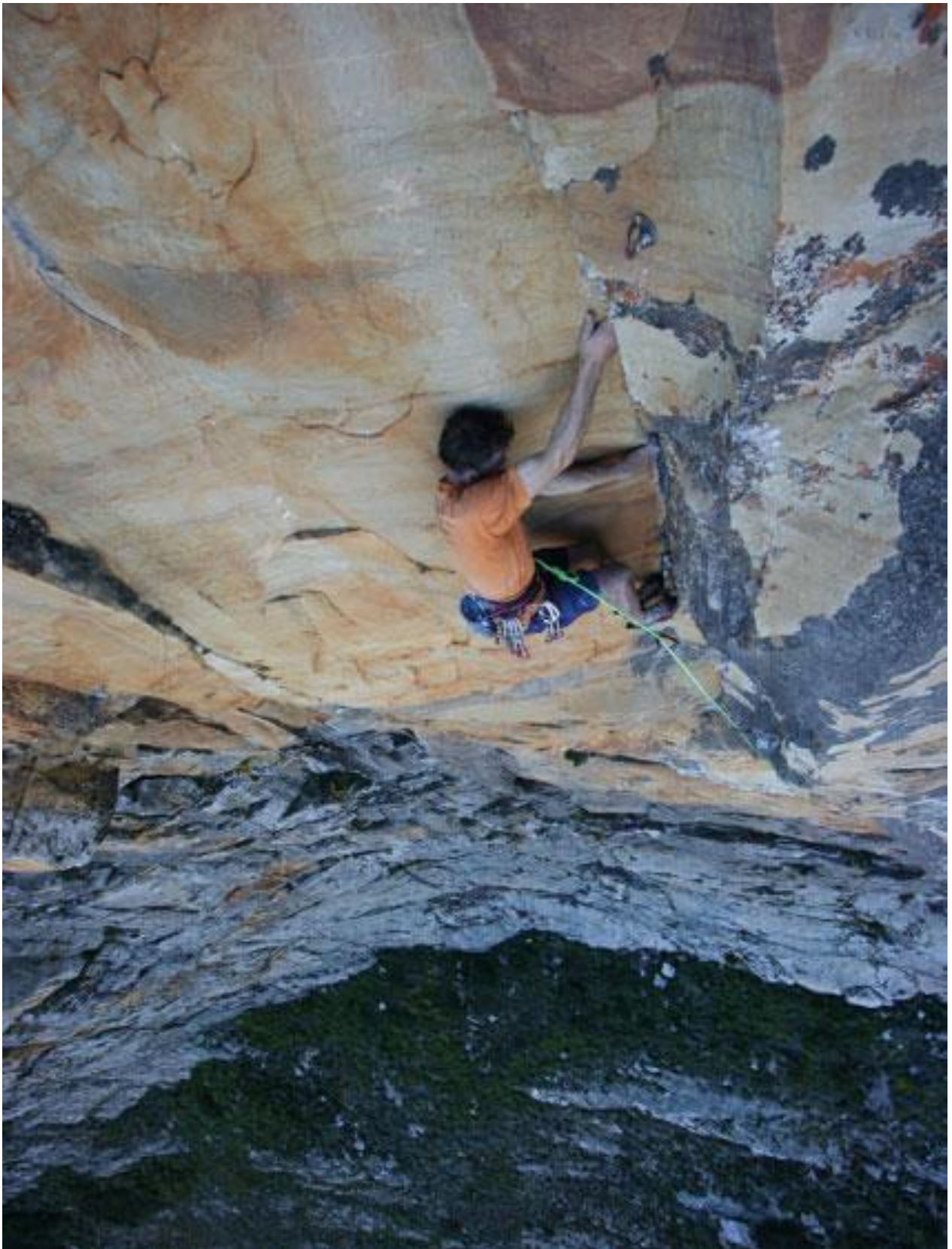
**PITCH 7-14:** There are two grade 29 pitches above the halfway ledge. Descriptions to follow.

## DESCENT

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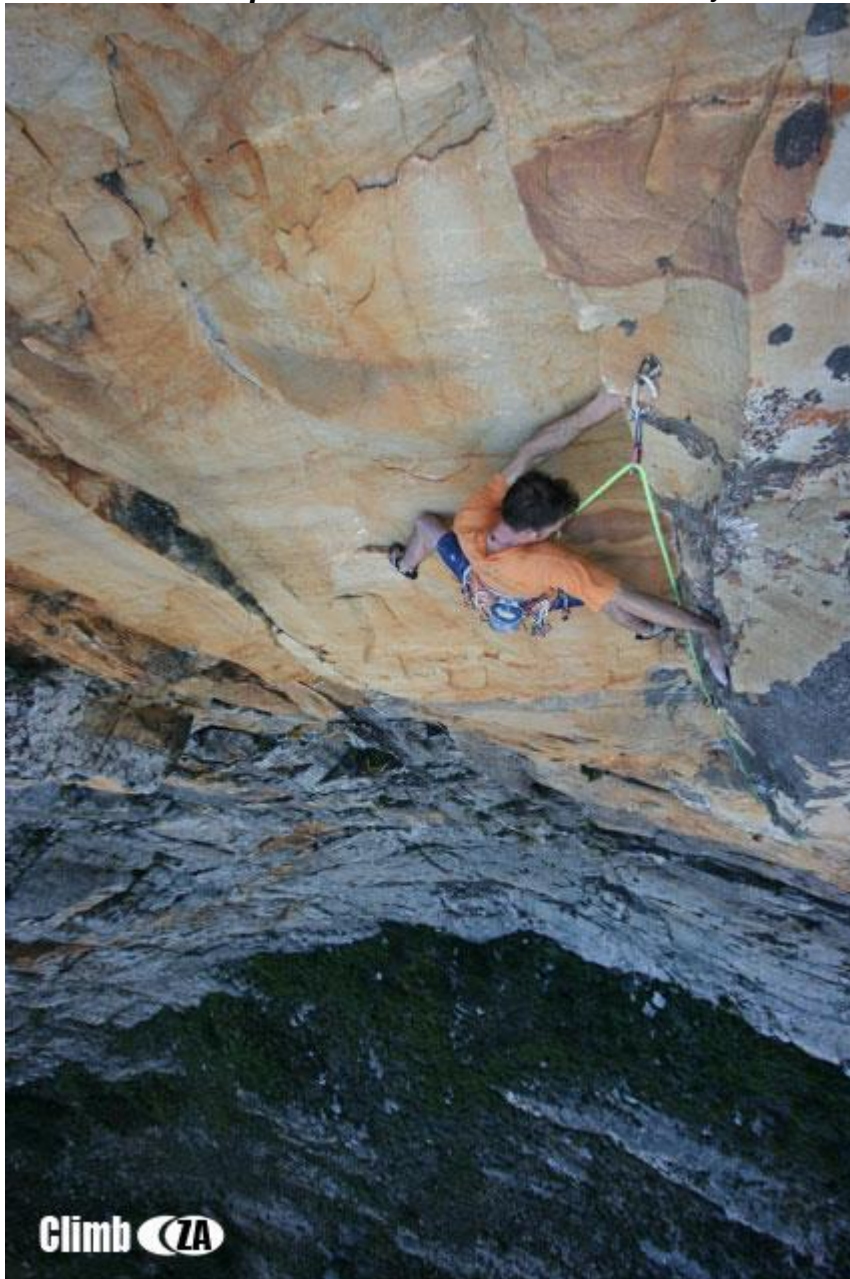
Rapping down the route is complicated by roofs and diagonal pitches, so remember to clip in on the way down. Trailing a second rope or twinning two 60m trad ropes allows for a fast descent via Down Time.







**Dave Birkett on pitch 6 of Newborn. Photo Jeremy Samson Oct 2009**







*Clinton Martinengo cranking it up Newborn. Oct 2008*

## **BLOOD IS SWEETER THAN HONEY 240m 22 \*\*\*\***

***Blood is Sweeter than Honey*** is, in my view a superb route with excellent and consistent climbing on a good line up a fantastic face. Although the grade is generally moderate with only a few grade 20 or 21 moves here and there it is a potentially serious route and not for the faint hearted. I would give it a seriousness grade of at least S2. It requires competent trad climbing with lateral thinking here and there. The on-sight grade is considerably harder –perhaps even by two grades - than a repeat ascent and overall it warrants a grade of 22. I would rate it as a “must do” for any aspirant trad climber.

Tony Dick and Charles Edelstein, that's me, climbed the route on Friday 26 October 2007. The route was first climbed on the Yellow Wood Amphitheatre in 1987 by Paul Schlotfeld and company. The description can be found in the 1988 MCSA journal. It is a serious route for it's grade and requires competent and careful trad climbing on all the pitches. The least serious pitch and the best protected is actually the 8<sup>th</sup> pitch that is graded 22. In fact, I found this particular pitch to be only grade 20 or at most 21.



The first two pitches belie the grade of 17 and requires some lateral thinking to climb. Don't bother combining them as the rope drag that ensues merely slows one down.

The third pitch is excellent and is grade 22 but the route description is a little confusing. It states: "climb up *past* the open book". When it should merely state "climb the open book" that is directly above the right side of the belay ledge. The open book has a tricky start and found myself having to do a balancy step up with using a very reachy pinch grip with my right hand. The climbing then requires technical stemming moves but the pro is OK. It seems that an easier option may be to traverse far right to the left facing corner and climb that. However I have yet to do so.

Don't combine this pitch with the 4<sup>th</sup> unless you are going well and you found the 3<sup>rd</sup> easy. The 4<sup>th</sup> 19 pitch is very serious if you diagonal up to the right from the shale rail. There is a long side-ways run-out with no worthwhile gear placements until you are virtually through the crux in the overhang. However, an easier option is to traverse low along the shale rail and climb up below and to the right of the overhang.

The 5<sup>th</sup> pitch is fairly straightforward and the 6<sup>th</sup> grade 18 pitch is again run-out but experienced trad climbers will find it superb and positive. Avoid climbing this route after rain. It is then run-out and wet.

The 8<sup>th</sup> grade 20 pitch is a little sketchy with regard to the protection and the rock and the moves seem to force you into a strenuous layback at the crux. But the way to do it is to do a stemming move.

The 9<sup>th</sup> 22 pitch is well protected and is only about grade 20 or, at most 21 if you continue to the top of the recess before moving out right.

The 5<sup>th</sup> pitch is fairly straightforward and the 6<sup>th</sup> is again run-out but experienced trad climbers will find it superb and positive.

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The 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> pitches are spectacular, first by exiting out left under the massive overhangs and then up the final airy arete.

**Descent:** Walk down east to the *Timerity Abseil*.





**Willem Le Roux on the spectacular airy final arete on Blood is Sweeter than Honey:** Photo: C Edelstein 20 August 2015



### **Blood Is Sweeter Than Honey '22' (G3)**

Start in the middle of the amphitheatre, just right of a prominent big block. The route follows the obvious break up to the first set of big roofs about 120 m up.

1. 45 m '17' (F3): Follow the obvious fracture system to a small roof, then keep going to a block belay.
2. 40 m '17' (F3): Step left and follow the break, occasionally moving out right to a belay ledge on the left.
3. 25 m '20' (G2): From the right of the ledge, climb up past an open book and traverse right to a hanging stance below the roof.
4. 25 m '19' (G1): Traverse right to a break in the roof, climb through the roof and up the wall to a small stance on the right.
5. 30 m '17' (F3): Climb to the small roof above the traverse left under the roof, keep going to a recessed corner with an arête on the left.
6. 40 m '18' (F3): Step up and out left onto the arête, climb to the big half-way ledge.
7. 25 m '10' (E2): Scramble up and left into the recess. Make a stance on a blocky ledge on the left side of the recess.
8. 40 m '20' (G2): Climb the face above, moving out slightly left onto the arête, keep going up to a small stance on the right below some roofs.
9. 40 m '22' (G3): Traverse left to a break in the roof, climb the break until forced to move right and up (crux: peg runner). Keep railing right to a break and move up to a small stance.
10. 35 m '19' (G1): Climb the open book above and then move left into the recess below a large roof. Move up and rail out left under the roof. Stance around the corner.
11. 40 m '16' (F2): Climb the recess above, to below a roof, move out left and up. Scramble to the top.

Opening party: Paul Schlotfeldt and Dave Shewell, January 1988.

## **PRIME TIME DIRECT 260m 25 \*\*\*\*\***

Tiny cams like black and blue aliens are essential. Unless you are very bold, this route eats small cams. So, take double to ¾ inch. Only need one each from 1, 1.5, 2, 2.5 and 3 inch.

Standard set of nuts to one inch.

**Pitch 1.** 35m 23. Start just left of the "camp" site off some blocks just right of a bushy area. It is clear to your right. About 40m above is a rectangular overhang. Climb easily for 10m to a left facing corner. Climb the corner to a loose ledge with Aloes. You will see a bolts on the wall to your left. Move right a few metres along the ledge and then climb to a loose red/orange traverse line and then up funky moves to a good stance. There is another bolt to your left.

**Pitch 2:** 45m 24/25. Move off right and climb up to a shale rail. Place one or two large cams here. Continue up into the right facing corner below the rectangular overhang and step out left to do a move up to very thin rail level with the overhang. Take care to place one or two micro cams. Climb the crux up to the base of the left facing corner.



Continue up the left facing yellow/red corner to the overhang. Rail right and to the arête. Climb the arête for 3m to a rail and rail right for 3m and then continue up the right sloping ramp to a stance on the left. (old peg).

**Pitch 3:** 35m 22 Climb directly up heading for the large left facing red corner. Place good gear where available as it becomes run out. Once in the corner go right on a gnarly grey rail. Move into the corner systems up to the right and climb up to a large ledge on the right.

***Snort starting the 3<sup>rd</sup> (22) pitch of Prime Time with a full rack.***

*Photo Stewart Middlemiss 2010*

**Pitch 4:** 21 55m. Step up off the left edge of the ledge and continue up the crack system for 55m to the halfway ledge.

**Pitch 5:** 16 20m. Walk left and climb up easy blocks to a ledge that is down and to the left of the obvious nose.

**Pitch 5:** 22 30m. Climb the steep crack up to the left for 2 or 3 metres and then step right onto the red/orange face. Continue up to the shallow right facing corner and then exit left of the overhang on dodgy rock to continue a few meters to a rail. Rail right to a good stance,



**Pitch 6:** 21 25m. Climb the crack system to a hanging stance about 22m higher just before the steep right dihedral. If there are 3 climbers, then one may as well stay at the stance at the beginning of the pitch while the other clears the gear which is needed for pitch 7.

**Pitch 7:** 23 35m. Climb up to the rail and move right (small cams). Then move back left and pull onto the huge scary flake. Climb up this to the overhang and then step out left. Climb the overhanging crack system to where it eases. Move up left onto a ramp but climb straight through higher up by under-clinging the overhang. Do not escape up and left up the ramp which looks easier. It is dirty and horrible. Move up diagonally right to a rail and stance on the right on a sitting ledge. If you are short of gear, there is a thread point after the crux.

**Pitch 8:** 21 45m. Step right across the gap and climb the classic crack for 10m or so. Then diagonal out left and up the face (run out) to a large ledge system. **Pitch 9:** 18/19 30m. Find your way out up and right.





**Anthony Hall on the third (22) pitch of Prime Time. Photo C Edelstein 2007**



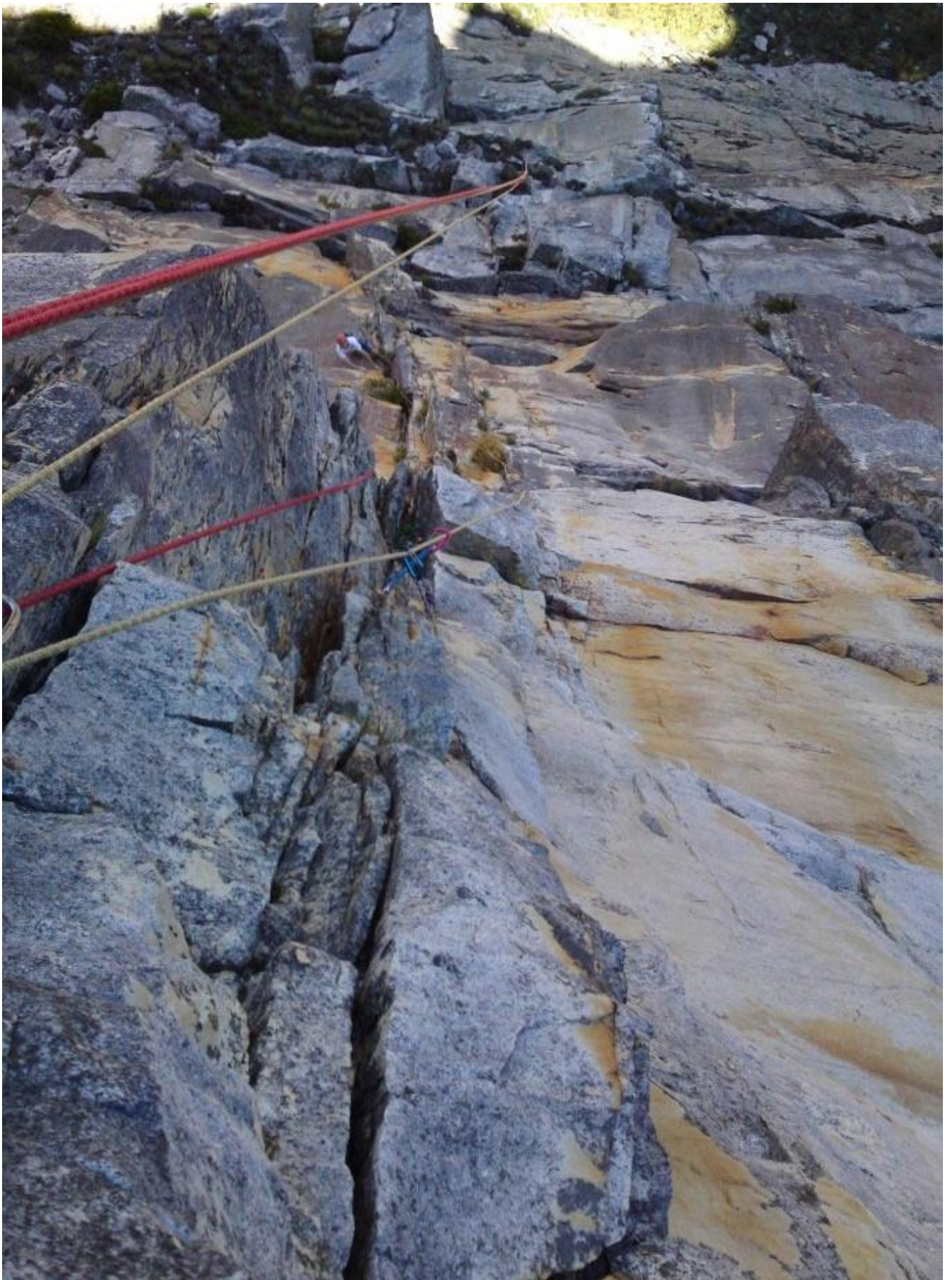
**Anthony Hall on the 6<sup>th</sup>(22) pitch of Prime Time. The time stamp suggests we ain't gonna finish before dark Photo C Edelstein 2007**





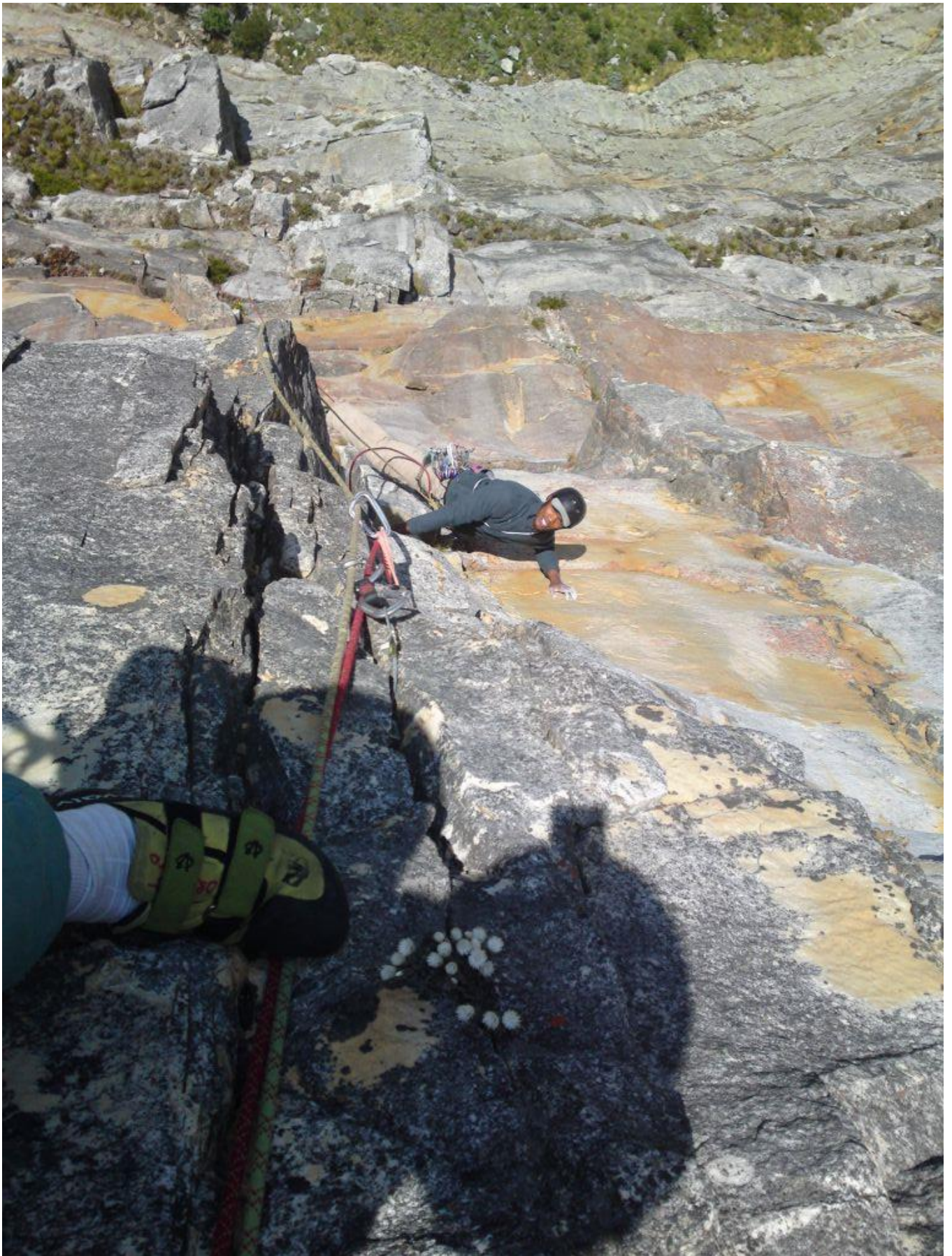
***Snort starting the crux pitch of Prime Time. Photo Stewart Middlemiss 2010***





***Looking down the crux 23 pitch of Prime Time at Willem Le Roux. Photo C Edelstein***





***Looking down the crux 23 pitch of Prime Time at Farrel Davids. Photo C Edelstein Jan 2010***



## **A Fine Time on Prime Time Direct E5 6a (25) by two not-so-tired and wanked out TATWOCians.**

I was thrashing down the Yellowwood scree with Stewart Middlemiss yesterday in the gloom of descending night fall feeling exhilarated by doing a free ascent of Prime Time Direct. I was also wondering how come I had managed to do one of the hardest routes of my climbing career at age 51. Stewart reckons that it is because trad climbing takes so many years of experience to learn – something like 10,000 hours are needed to do an activity like trad well. He mentioned that the average age of the top amateur participants of a sport called ski-skating is around 40 to 50.

Well, I felt extremely gratified and privileged to be able to have such a feeling of empowerment and success given the way so many people my age are in deep trouble with their physical health. 99% of 50 year old people consulting with me with their sore hips, backs and knees are overweight, look 10 years or more older than me, are on cholesterol, diabetic or high blood pressure medication and are by and large un-healthy.

So, to force home the point, if you want to have a sense of physical well-being in later life, trad climbing is definitely right up there as a life style activity to keep you inspired, fit and healthy and your weight under control. As a doctor I feel two of my greatest medical successes are getting two mates trad climbing and it is worth mentioning their names. One is Mark Straughan, literally known as Jelly Belly by his kids. He, a year ago did his first trad route, Arrow Final and recently did his second trad route Slack Time on Yellowwood. He has lost 20kg in the last year! My friend Hugh Willis also needs a mention. Although he has always dabbling in trad climbing since University days, it is only since climbing Mt Kenya and doing routes like Milner Frontal in a day from Cape Town that he has lost the Michelin Tyre round his waist and now is a lean and keen athlete in anything that comes along.

But enough propaganda and to the day.

Stewart is one of the few South African climbers that has on-sighted ***Snapdragon, and Technicolor Darkness*** routes that I still have to lead clean. He has also climbed ***Automatic for the People*** and was on the finishing ascent of ***Dog of Thunder***. He has lived in Salt Lake City for the last decade where he regularly climbs grades in the high 20's. Like the rest of us his fitness has been hampered by age related injuries and ailments but he is always bok to do a big route with me when visiting here.

So, after a little training on ***Africa Edge*** – a route he grades 23 and he rates as being the best route he has done on TM – we did the 04h30 start to Du Toits. 90min walk up, tea and climb. We took 7 litres of fluid. It was going to be a hot day.

The first thing I noticed when I got there is that Stewart clearly has done his 10,000 hours in trad climbing because he was pro-active and efficient in flaking the ropes and getting ready to climb. From setting off from Cape Town and starting the climb, including having the mandatory cup of tea was just 3 hours!

Stewart led the 1st pitch of ***Prime Time Direct***. The first crux involves a very awkward and tenuous lay-back and stemming sequence up a left facing corner. At least the gear is bomber. He waxed it and then found the second awkward crux equally hard. I followed and for the second time found the first crux at my limit and very difficult to read. Although there is bomber gear for the leader I was happy to be on a top rope.





Stewart following pitch 3 (22) on Prime Time Direct Photo. C Edelstein

The second pitch is the monster pitch of the route. I find it as hard as any of the modern 25 pitches on TM that I have done. I set off up the first run out bit that Stewart also thought could do better with a bolt and then into the corner above with the no hands body tension rest. I placed the 2 RP's and then wobbled round left onto the face and up to the tiny hold that seemed to have



shrunk since my last sojourn there. I shook placing the shallow blue alien and then really struggled to get the tiny purple alien past my left hand that was in the way. I snatched a glance to see if the placements were OK and rocketed up to the next juglet. Again, time had eroded measurements. The RP 2 placement was much higher than I remembered and I was already beginning to wither. I fiddled it in and went for the move. My strength was draining fast and I cocked up the move by using the wrong left foot hold – same as the last time. I stretched out my left toe to the sloper and gingerly stemmed up with my right leg trembling and found the micro-edge. I could not move or bounce my hand up so instead, extremely tenuously, crossed over with my right hand and grabbed the crimp above.

The next section flowed well and I got to the stance unscathed. I felt the same as the previous time, that the route should end here. If these two pitches were on any crag anywhere in South Africa they would make for a great stand-alone route.

Stewart followed and impressed me by freeing the pitch. We agreed that the best way to grade the pitch would be E5 6a which translates to grade 25 even though the technical aspect of the crux was only 23 which is probably its grade if it were bolted.

I then raced up the 22 pitch and Stewart climbed the long 55m 21 pitch to the halfway ledge. The sun was beginning to peak out and Stewart did a fine ascent of the next 22 pitch which is only 22 if you have the beta to lay back up it. This is not obvious and I remember falling off it on my first attempt about 2 years ago.

I then led the next 21 pitch to the hanging stance. We had, as I always now do on Yellowwood, been hauling the pack with water, food, torches etc, with a separate rope. While Stewart was climbing and trailing the rope, the pack fell off the ledge and plummeted about 25m down to land on a lower ledge. Little did we know at the time but a small nuclear explosion took place in the pack involving an old apple, a can of coke and a large bag of Salt and Vinegar potato chips. Needless to say the bag was filled with a sticky mess that pervaded everything in it. Our water bottles were intact which was fortunate indeed because we needed all of the water and more.

I climbed the next crux pitch past the Damocles flake with relative ease and was surprised that I did not cramp or get pumped at all. I must be the fittest I have ever been for this type of climbing. Stewart followed but like so many of us before him, blew out at the crux and that was the end of his energy for the day. He was disappointed of course but as an old Prime Time vet I was not surprised at all and hence my challenge to anyone who does a beta-free on-sight of this route. The steepness of the route, the hot sun, the position of this crux high up on the route, the intimidation factor all make it one of the most difficult pitches on any route to on-sight at this grade. In its context it is undoubtedly also an E5 pitch but technically only 5b or 5c. He then led the next 20 pitch, but the sun, and sore feet were now becoming almost intolerable. I led the run-out grade 21 pitch with some temerity thinking my feet would slide off the little sloper holds in the hot sun but found it surprisingly easy and then combined the not-so-trivial top pitch to finish.

What a blast, what a place and how great to share it with one of my old mates.

We rapped down and almost got a rope stuck on the last point. And then down the hill to my van stumbling the last 20 minutes in the dark. I got Stewart to carry down some spare gear that I did not need up there as retribution for putting a rock in Tini's rucksack on a trip to Milner some 3 years ago. He did it with some misgivings but I whined about my neck saying I could not carry it. Fair is fair, I sort of convinced him, because he had the benefit of a full rack and ropes stashed at the base.

And of course, the day was consummated by the Windhoek lager stop at the Du Toit's kloof lodge.



## TIME WARP 270m 22 OR G1M1 \*\*

***“Similar to Smalblaar Ridge – a mixture of five star and nil star pitches, all of them sensational.”***

**Start:** The line is obvious and is up the middle of the amphitheatre above the left side of the three clumps of trees at the foot of the wall. (Camp-site). The line of cracks is however gained by starting 50 metres left of the trees and traversing back after climbing up 65 metres. Two, more direct, starts have been added by Hilton Davies and Guy Patterson-Jones (26) and Charles Edelstein and Clinton Martinengo (23)

**Pitch 1:** 40m 15 “F1”. Climb broken grey rock, trending slightly right.

**Pitch 22:** 25m 17 “F2”. Up a tricky face around the corner on the right, to a stance next to a dirty, broken break continuing up the cliff.

**Pitch 3:** 18m 18 “F3”. Traverse right, under the roof and jump onto a good stance at the start of the traverse for pitch 4.

**Pitch 5:** 20m 18 “F3”. Traverse right on steep slabs as far as a thin handrail.

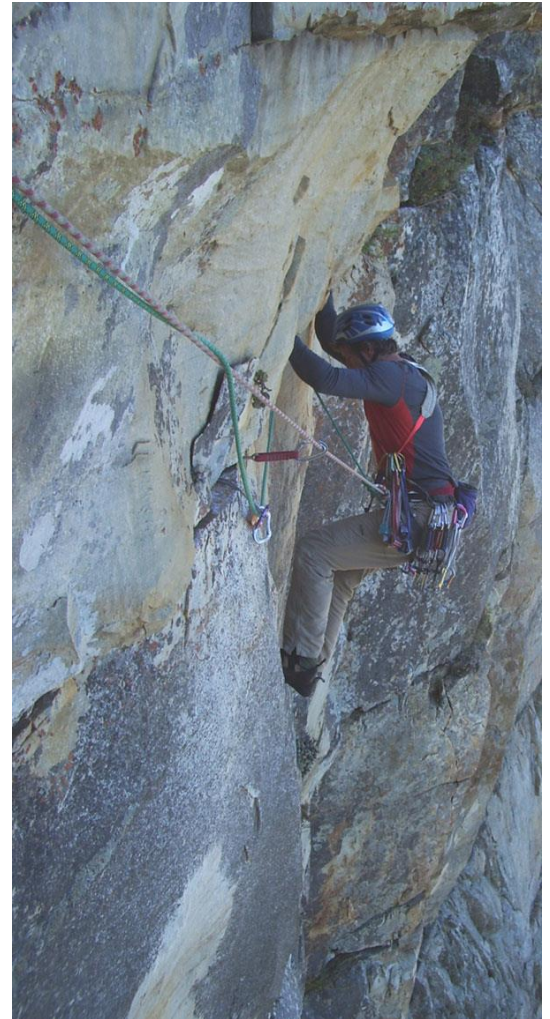
**Pitch 6:** 15m 19 “G1”. The Handrail Pitch”. Traverse right.

**Pitch 7:** 20m 21 “F3 M2” or G2. “The Non-Handrail Pitch”. Traverse right at a low level, to reach a block in the main line of cracks (2 nuts and 2 pegs). Climbed free at “G2”.

**Pitch 8:** 35m 18 “F3”. Climb the crack, passing a protruding nose directly above the trees on the left mentioned.

**Pitch 9:** 35m 17 “F2”. Climb the crack using the left edge.

**Pitch 10:** 15m 16 “F1”. Continue up the crack.



***Bruce Daniel leading pitch 4 of Time Warp. Photo Hilton Davies Feb 2010***

This brings one to the halfway ledge, above which the same system of cracks is followed for 3 pitches mostly on dodgy rock.

**Pitch 11:** 25m 19 “F3”. Climb the crack to a large hidden stance (Very Poor Rock).

**Pitch 12:** 30m 20 “G1”. Climb the crack a bit more desperately (good nut runners but poor rock).

**Pitch 13:** 30m 20 “G1”. Up the Dirty crack towards the overhangs, and out right on a horizontal crack. Walk 10 metres further right.



**Pitch 14:** 30m 18 A1 or 22 “F3 M1”. “The Pedulum Pitch”. Climb back left into the perfect jam crack, and pendulum out of the roof to a tiny ledge on the right wall. Climb past the right end of the roof to large flakes above. Or:1

On the face above is a bolt placed by German climbers. Climb the face to the bolt and continue up the face (22) to the large flakes.

**Pitch 15:** 40m 17 “F2”. Follow the flakes and cracks diagonally left, finishing up a chimney.

**Pitch 16:** 35m 19 “F3” Climb the overhanging face above the stance, with a strenuous looking chimney crack on its left side or walk left 30 metres through the overhangs to finish up an easy ramp.

First Ascent: D Cheesmond and A Dick 1977

**Descent:** Head down to the left to the [Timerity Abseil](#).

## TIME WARP DIRECT 26

**Start:** Directly above and to the left of the “campsite” one can see a thin, leftwards tending crack which leads to a grassy ledge below a steep corner. **Time Warp Direct** climbs this.

**Pitch 1: 24: 20m**

Climb up easily to the base of the thin crack. Climb some technical moves up and left past pitons to a small break before another thin crack, then climb this thin crack straight up to stance at a grassy ledge.

**Pitch 2 26: 30m** Climb straight up the steep corner for 10m until one reaches the left end of a roof. Reach up and clip a piton, then traverse right a few meters and blast straight through the roof to get established on the face above. Climb directly right and up for about 8m to stance at a small ledge.

Here one can either abseil 50m straight down to the campsite or climb an easy pitch straight up and left to join with Time Warp.

**FA:** Hilton Davies and Guy Paterson-Jones (Feb 2012)

## SECOND COMING 270M 23

The route description is published in the 1988 MCSA journal page 131.

*“While trying to straighten things up in the amphitheatre we made something as crooked as the rest. It was like old time again with David Davies still belaying off one loose nut.”* Tony Dick.

**Start:** At the easy break to the right of **Armageddon Time** just to the left last clump of trees. Scramble up 10 metres.

## FANTASTIC TIME 240m 23 \*\*\*\*\*

There were sounds of dread wafting up from below. Lamentations and gnashing of teeth could be heard. There were horrible grunting and grating sounds. My anxiety levels were increasing



as the sounds grew louder and the tone became a deeper rumbling sound. Was this the time for the dirt nap?

A helmet appeared 5m below followed by an apparition covered in lichen and dirt. It grunted and growled up to the ledge where I sat spooked and it then flopped unceremoniously onto the grey rock next to me. It looked scary and awful with arms larger than my thighs. Massive deltoids, pecs and biceps and lats bulged huge with distended veins making the Octopussy tattoo appear grotesque and intimidating.

The apparition then melodramatically stated: "I am gonna vomit". I turned my head away bemused expecting the worst but held the belay rope steadfastly as Farrell was still climbing on the other one.

Dark Horse fortunately did not spill his guts on the ledge but after the big man whimpered a little more he composed himself and once Farrell joined us on the ledge we were all ready to face further fearful climbing above us.

We had climbed the first 6 pitches, of a route that I had previously dubbed Full Time, especially, as the 6<sup>th</sup> pitch is really a "Full Time" experience. It entails scary climbing on an overhanging thin fin of yellow rock with move after move of tricky lay back, stemming, and crimps on dodgy looking holds. No move was harder than 21 but the climbing is relentless at this grade and gripping to the max.

This was my previous high point with Dave Vallet some months ago. We called it Almost Time.

Ahead were 2 options: on the left was a very overhanging recess with no gear placements visible – I had rapped down this way with Dave 2 weeks previously. And on the right was a vegetated crack leading up to an overhanging jamb crack at 10m or so. Farrell wanted the lead and he thrashed around for 90 minutes before snatching defeat in the now burning sun. I went to his high point and somehow gained the overhanging crack with the odd "take" on gear to clean off loose veg and rock. I was pumped and started aiding the crack when a cam popped and I went flying down a few metres till Dark Horse halted my further descent.

I gained a small ledge and brought the other two up. Dark Horse and Farrell sort of freed the pitch on TR!





***Dave Vallet on the second pitch of Fantastic Time 11 June 2010: Photo: C Edelstein***





***Dark Horse sort of freeing the 6<sup>th</sup> pitch.*** Photo C Edelstein

There were no takers for the next pitch so up I went again on steep lay backs to find myself in a left facing corner filled with a semi-detached block weighing about a ton. I aided up it as I could see myself possibly taking a fall and yanking the block off in the process. Although it is keyed in, it still did not inspire confidence. Both Neels and Farrell freed it on TR, although resting on the rope at times, so the route does go free.

We topped out and rapped "Down Time".

Back at the base my companions were not having anything to do with "Full Time" and they wanted a name that befitted the climbing. Somebody said something about it being a fantastic route and so it is now "Fantastic Time" and so it was a few weeks later that Dark Horse and I did a complete free ascent.



***Dark Horse and Farrell belaying me on the final pitch. (Yes, the rope is tight! But notice how steep the route is).***



Yellowwood again did not disappoint. There is another great route up the main amphitheatre arguably the best. The route has some seriously heady sections but unlike some of the other major routes there are no x-rated pitches and also no run-out sections. The block on the last pitch was later assessed and is quite solid. The gear is by and large bomber.

Grading the route is difficult using the numerical South African System. It, like "Prime Time" is probably British grade E4 6a. (It is not as hard as Prime Time Direct which I would grade E6 6a. Alternatively, I would give the route an overall South African Grade of 23 with a Severity 2 grade. Unlike Prime Time and Armageddon Time, there are no "stopper moves" but the overhanging jamb crack on pitch 7 is very challenging.

There was no fixed gear used and none needed. All the pitches were climbed ground up without pre-inspection.

## **"Fantastic Time" Route Description**

Fantastic Time is a true Yellowwood Test piece with varied, exciting and bold climbing in exhilarating positions. It is one of the best main wall routes but, in my view is pipped into second place by Prime Time Direct. However, unlike the other routes on the Main Wall there are no X or R rated pitches and experienced and competent climbers can climb this route safely. Nevertheless, as with all the routes on Yellowwood, there are sections of dodgy rock that must be treated with respect!





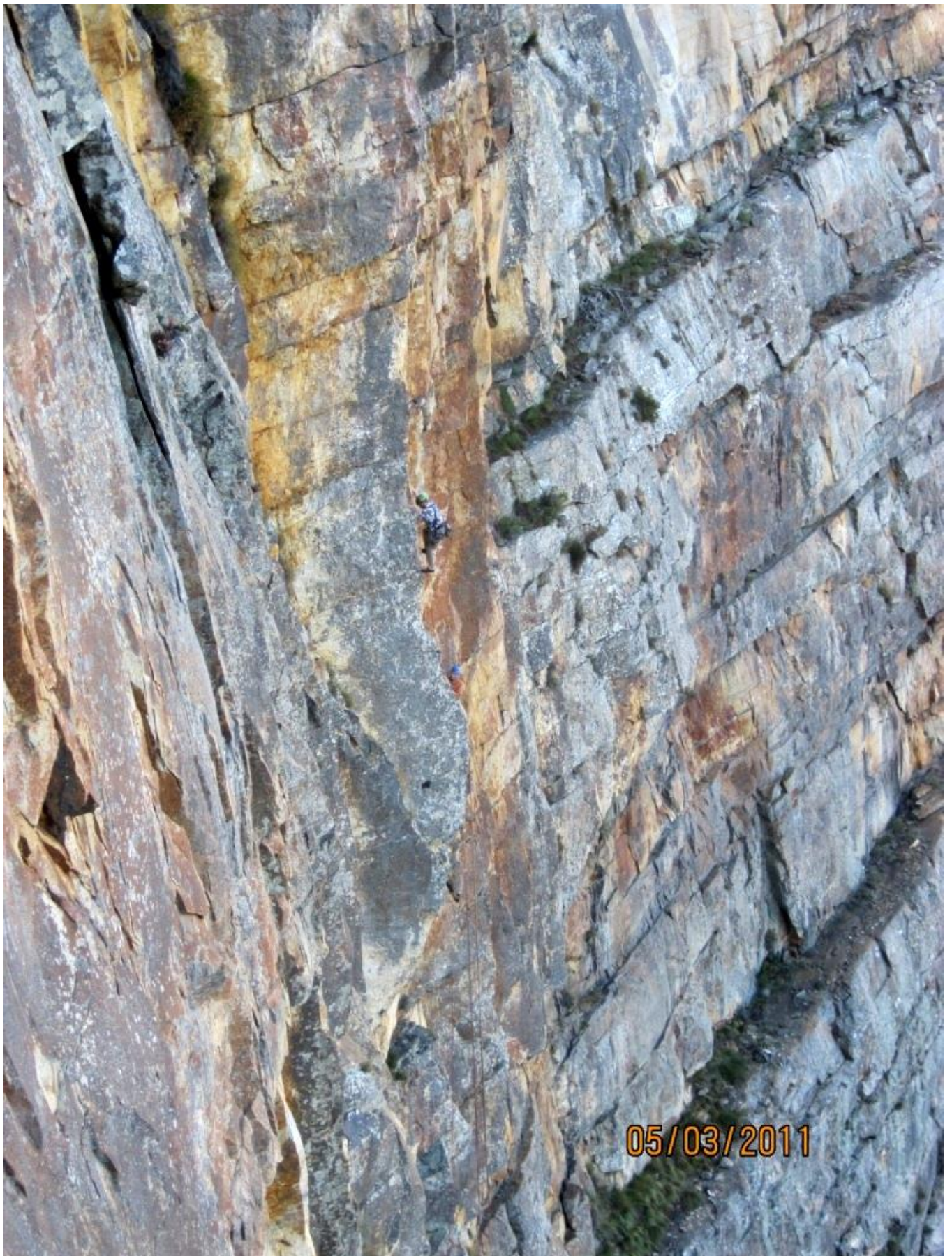
The red triangles on the photo topo show additional stances. If you do not know the route, you will get rope drag....

***Kevin Smith starting the bold overhanging 6<sup>th</sup> pitch 23.***  
***Photo C Edelstein 2010***









***Stewart Middlemiss on the airy 3<sup>rd</sup> pitch of Fantastic Time. Photo Andrew Porter***



## HALF TIME:

Half Time, in its own right, is a great outing of 4 excellent pitches that gets you relatively quickly to the Half Way Ledge. It is the equivalent in length of doing a route on the Chess pieces but without the extra walking and there is an easy 3 rap escape using Down Time which should be easily spotted by walking left for about a rope length. Despite the reputation of Down Time, normal 60m ropes are just fine as additional abseil points have been built since the original route was made.

**Start:** The route starts about 50m further right of Armageddon Time just past a boulder and Yellowwood tree that is against the base of the wall and where the trail along the base levels out. The start is marked by a cairn and ahead and to the right is a dense clump of Yellowwoods.

**Pitch 1:** (18) 30m Climb easily to a short left facing corner topped by an overhang on the left. Pull through into the crack and continue to the good ledge in a left facing recess.

**Pitch 2:** (20) 20m Stem up the yellow-red recess. The hollow sounding flakes on the right are quite stable but use with care. Move up right to below an overlap and pull through using the scary looking jammed block. Use long slings to avoid drag if you want to combine the next pitch. Climb diagonally left up the ramp to stance on a tiny ledge close to the arête. Or combine the next pitch but it is a full 62m!

**Pitch 3:** (21) 45m Climb straight up 12 or so metres tending to stay on the left arête avoiding the dodgy rock on the right. Step round left at the highest overlap visible and do airy steep lay back moves on small holds to better holds and then exit to the right. Continue up 3m and exit right past the overhang to gain a ramp. Climb 20m up the ramp to stance on the highest ledge on a cantilevered block. You can also stance about 8m lower. **Pitch 4:** (19) 25 or 25m Climb the left facing corner and exit diagonally left on to the face just before the corner ends and the holds and the gear run out to gain the Halfway Ledge

Walk left 40m or so past the start of Armageddon Direct and past the huge left facing corner system to stance below a right leaning thin crack system in gray rock.

## FULL TIME

**Pitch 5:** (19) 30m Climb up the recess using the thin crack and exit right after 7m where the holds run out. Head for the arete and continue up and round the corner right to a sloping rail. Then climb up the corner to stance on large sloping blocks.

**Pitch 6:** (23) 45m. Step left off the ledge onto the exposed arête and climb the yellow overhanging fin on lay backs and crimps and stemming moves. Continue into the lichen covered rock and past the slightly grotty groove to exit to the left on to a good ledge. (This is a long and intense pitch and a big rack is useful.)

One can escape easily from here by walking left about 30m along a ledge system to the Down Time abseil point. A belay is recommended as there is one exposed but easy move.

**Pitch 7:** (23) 25m Step right off the ledge and climb the left facing corner using a dodgy looking flake at 7m. Attain the obvious overhanging jamb crack. Climb this to a small sitting perch on a block



**Pitch 8:** (21) (22 for shorties) 35m Climb up the a obvious short right facing recess on lay backs on lichen covered rock. Climb the recess to easier ground and follow your nose straight to the top passing a classic traddy grassy chimney but avoiding the easier grot on the right.

FA 2010: C Edelstein (Snort) Neels Havenga pitches 1 to 4. C Edelstein and Dave Vallet Pitch 5 C Edelstein Pitch 6 C Edelstein, Neels Havenga and Farrell Davids Pitches 7 and 8.

FFA C Edelstein with Neels Havenga 13 April 2011

**Descent.** *Timerity Abseil* is the best way down or use *Down Time* if you are familiar with it.

## **AFRICAN TIME - "AIN'T A STRAIGHT LINE" (25)**

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The route offers great quality climbing particularly from pitch 3. After making the halfway ledge, we found that other climbers had nabbed our intended continuation. After making a few abortive (and white-knuckle) attempts at a direct continuation, we eventually, in African Time, meandered towards other parts of the wall to resume our route on less-crowded rock.

The route starts approximately 40m left of Armageddon Time and about 10 meters right of a big flat boulder surrounded by Wild Peach trees. This is almost directly below the left edge of the large stepped roofs of Armageddon's third pitch. The route follows close to a fairly obvious, vegetated, chossy looking, straight-line break that runs up the first half of the wall at about 10 degrees left of vertical. At the third pitch it rails right (through the large left-facing corner) and continues up a clean crack line that runs parallel and about 8 meters right of the main vegetated break.

**Pitch 1:** 45m, (20) This pitch starts up easy ground (loose flakes) in the very shallow recess, which forms the start of the break. Continue on small holds up the steepest part of the seam past an old peg. Higher up, pull steeply to a small bushy ledge. Follow the main vegetated vertical break above for about 10 meters, to where it steepens. Rail left at an orange patch of rock below a small roof and up, to stance on a good ledge in a recess (gear for the stance can be found several meters further up).

**Pitch 2:** 35m, (20) From the ledge climb a few meters up and right to a small ledge. Climb a steep, reachy finger crack for several meters until it is possible to step out right onto the arête. Climb the arête to a ledge at the bottom left of the large Armageddon roofs. From the ledge step left across the vegetated recess and then up it for about 16 meters to a rail. Climb across right across the void to a ledge. Then climb up past a small roof (thin), and up to gain the clean, leftwards-trending crack up to a big, comfortable ledge.

**Pitch 3:** 45m (21). The route continues straight up the clean, leftwards tending crack line about 6 meters in from the left hand edge of the ledge. Climb this through layback moves, and two small roofs, to continue above leftwards around a small, blunt arête into less steep ground in a recess. Stem up the steep crack to gain a good rail 5 meters higher. Move up and slightly right to finish up a layback and thin face moves (the sting in the tail) to gain the halfway ledge.

The route continues way over to the right (towards Smalblaar Ridge). Walk along the ledge past Armageddon and the exposed step-over. Approximately 15 meters beyond this is an obvious break, where a steep vertical, very grassed-up crack leads into a roof. Three meters right of this is a leftwards tending, thin finger crack which runs up to the right hand side of the roof.

**Pitch 4:** 45m, (23). Climb the finger crack. Follow the wider crack above, through another roof and straight up to a big ledge.



**Pitch 5:** 35m, (25). Continue straight up the line of the last pitch for about 5 meters. Trend left on small ledges and faces to reach the base of the obvious overhanging crack just left of the big corner. Climb the crack to a stuck blue Alien. The stretch out left to the jug and mantel onto to it. (Very hard for short climbers). Move back right and up to a stance.

**Pitch 6:** 25m, (22). Go left along the ledge for about 3 meters. Climb the vertical finger crack, through 2 small roofs. Traverse a few meters left across the face above to gain (thin) a crack that is followed easily up to a ledge below a roof.

**Pitch 7:** 30m, (21). Climb the overhanging chimney / crack through the roof from the ledge (hard), into thin cracks in a face above and then straight up to a ledge. Climb one of the water runnels on the next face up to the top.

First Ascent: Johann Lanz and Robert Zipplies, February 2012

**Descent:** Walk down left (east) down the down sloping top of the Yellowwood amphitheatre about 15 minutes to the [Timerity Abseil](#).

## **AFRICAN TIME - AIN'T SIMPLY A STRAIGHT LINE**

### **270m 25**

Johann Lanz

#### **Act 1, May 2010**

Saturday night 10 pm and I am hanging a hundred metres off the ground, from the wall of Yellowwood Amphitheatre. It is a beautiful, moonlit, still and starry night, and fortunately fairly warm. Despite my exhaustion and extreme physical and mental discomfort, there are moments of stillness, when I lean my head against the taut ropes, switch off my head torch and just hang there in the dark, resting. The halfway ledge when we reach it is an intense and beautiful relief, a chance to simply lie back, stare up at the stars, and relax for the first time that day.

We had started the first pitch in the biting cold of dawn. As our first day on the wall wore on, its unforgiving, wild and intimidating nature was hammered home. Yellowwood does not yield easily. Forging a line up the wall is hard, slow work. As darkness approached we eventually reached a ledge one pitch below the halfway ledge, and opted for what looked like the easiest, quickest way off. We learned two hard lessons: there is seldom an easy, quick way off Yellowwood; and hopeful perceptions of the wall from the comfort of below, bear little resemblance to the up-close experience.

We are taught these lessons repeatedly on four subsequent trips there to establish a route. Towards the end of every trip, we question why we do this to ourselves and vow never to return. Yet once the slog, the fear and the struggle have dulled in our memories, we are gradually wooed again, and before long, find ourselves out there once more, suckers for punishment. I am climbing again after a long absence as a new dad. These Yellowwood trips with Rob Zipplies become a celebration of everything I love about the intensity of our sport, and also cultivate the strong, enduring bonds of friendship that form between climbing partners. It feels wonderful to be back, and I realize how much I have missed being a climber.

#### **Act 2, June 2010**

After we return from our second trip, late at night, Sandra asks me if I had fun. Fun is not the word to describe time spent on Yellowwood Amphitheatre. Subjecting yourself to fifteen hours in a day of mostly extreme mental and physical discomfort and intensity cannot be described as fun.



And so it begs the question: why keep going back? Part of the answer is the thrill of pushing myself beyond physical and psychological comfort zones, of forging new ground. There are moments of exaltation, when I look ahead wondering if I can do it, fear holding me back, my will driving me on, and I go, forwards into the unknown, and make it through. And there are the times when I don't, and I hold back. There is the aspiration of moving beautifully over rock in a dance with gravity that I do simply for the love of it and the moments of contentment in doing it well. There is the relief of getting to the end.

There are also moments of beauty, the rising sun lighting the surrounding, snow covered peaks, the first orange light catching the right-hand ridge line of the amphitheatre, the brightness of the stars beyond the blackness of the looming wall.

But mostly discomfort dominates and the mind exists in a kind of dumbness, focused on a narrow spectrum of survival, underlain by a void of fear. We go through extremes of temperature from freezing belays before sunrise to sweating in the harsh midday sun, and rapid fluctuation between times of intense physical effort and seemingly long periods of inactive, anxious waiting.

Dragging myself onto the halfway ledge I feel more exhausted than I have felt in a very long time. Our second trip has established a route, this far. But the abseils and three hour slog down in the dark lie ahead.

In the days that follow, as the pain and stiffness in every muscle in my body recedes a little, once my scratched and worn hands no longer hurt when immersed in hot water, I am left with a deep sense of aliveness for having been there. And I know the next half of the wall awaits us.

### **Act 3, April 2011**

Enough time has passed, actually too much, because in the interim Snort has nabbed the continuation line that we were eying. On a day that is fast heating up, we find ourselves on the upper wall, white knuckled and strung out on poor rock, trying to forge a line on the steep wall between Snort's *Fantastic Time* and *Armageddon Direct*. It is not long before we retreat, tails between our legs, around the corner to the more welcoming and shady rock of the Chess Pieces. For a while we divert from Yellowwood to establish a nice route there we call ***Girl Next Door*** at grade 24. The justification for the name: Although it is Yellowwood that has the seductive status and allure, you are more likely to get lucky and have some fun with the girl next door.

On the walk out, we happen to eye out a line further right on the Yellowwood upper wall. A few weeks later, zooming in on the images in the comfort of my home, that line gradually begins to work its way into my aspirations.

### **Act 4, May 2011**

A year after first starting pitch one, we top-out. It should be a moment of elation, but relief is the overriding feeling. It has been another long, hard day on the wall. We are worn down, but we also feel a little cheated by the object of our desire. There is a nagging sense that she may have merely gone through the motions in response to our resolute overtures, without really yielding to us, and we are left feeling a little empty.

We have followed a good line to the top but have given in to aid climbing. And after that, an attitude of: "we're beaten, let's get out of here" has pervaded our climbing. In addition to one aid pitch, the need to clean certain cracks before being able to place gear, has meant we have hung on gear on two other pitches as well. Our pursuit of unrequited love feels like its over, this time, for sure.

### **Act 5, Feb 2012**

And like all unrequited lovers, it takes us a while to recover.



The bivvy spot against the base of Yellowwood Amphitheatre is a compelling place to sleep. The bright stars beyond are entirely framed by a fish bowl of dark rock, that includes the wall, its ridge-lines and the peaks across the valley. The wall, arching hundreds of meters overhead, dominates, both vision and mind. One can fall asleep in this splendid spot with a gratifying mixture of excited anticipation and peace.

Having worked the hardest parts of the upper wall the day before, we are looking forward to a good night's rest, before our attempt at a continual free ascent the next day. But unfortunately, our rest does not last the night.

Around 1 am Rob wakes me. "Listen", he says. It is a beautifully, still and windless night. The high squeaking of bats traversing the wall above, is all that breaks the silence. Until it grunts again. The grunt reverberates around the amphitheatre, so much deeper and louder than I would have imagined. "It sounds big", Rob says. But what is more alarming than the depth and volume of its growling grunts, is that each series of grunts is coming closer, heading straight and steadily along the base of the wall towards us, despite the deliberate noise that we are now making and our torch beams probing the dark.

A colony of dassies give panicked, high pitched expression to their terror. I am considering doing the same. But to Rob there is only one course of urgent action required and that is to prove that we are not intimidated. I stumble behind him through the dark yellowwood trees, half asleep, half terrified of our imminent meeting, wondering how well I will carry off the bluff of non-intimidation. With 40 meters between us the leopard stops in its tracks, its eyes bright in our torch beams. We eye-ball each other. Rob must be bluffing better than me, because it turns and disappears down the slope below. We stand on the edge watching its eyes and listening to the continued, deep sound of its grunts from below. Hearts pounding, we return to our beds where tiredness gets the better of fear, but not for long. At 3 am we are again forced up by approaching grunts for a re-play.

When our alarms sound, we are still uneaten and alive. But it is with far too little sleep that we start up pitch one, at first light. It's harder than I remember it, but it's also nicer. I find a critical small nut placement that I hadn't found before. Following the third pitch traverse, which has always intimidated me, I pay more attention to the sequence than the potential swing out into space, and for the first time I do it without resting on the gear. By pitch four, I am afloat on an ocean of rock, revelling in awesome moves and a spectacular position and I lead through its sustained multiple cruxes to the halfway ledge. Perhaps persistence is finally starting to pay-off, in this desperate affair of our hearts.

I've climbed pitch five in my mind many times. And on the previous day I hit it just right for the red point. The now clean crack takes gear beautifully and I cruise through the crux, so much so that when I reach the resting point above it, Rob shouts up that perhaps it needs down-grading. But that is only until he attempts it himself. I feel the elation that we missed last time, beginning to rise up inside me. But we are at the point of our greatest challenge below pitch six, Rob's pitch. He has that pre-exam feeling. On the attempt to free climb it the day before, he had not got the red point. Over a few attempts he had worked out the moves but for the final red point had fallen off the wild exit moves from the steep crux section. Now it is critical to this affair of ours that he stick it.

The pitch feels desperate when I follow it. Despite wanting to, I don't get the moves without a rest. When I finally work out how to mantle my feet onto the exit jug, I realize why Rob had not joined my wild whooping from below, when he reached this point on his brilliant send. There's still one thin, tenuous move to make. And once he'd made it, he whooped. After that nothing can stand in our way. Twelve hours after starting pitch one, I follow pitch eight, with the exposure of the whole wall between my feet, to top-out on Yellowwood for only the second time.



Sleeping back at the base that night, we're too tired and happy to get up when the leopard comes prowling again. Somehow it is not as daunting the second time around. Even the wall soaring over us seems more friendly. Yellowwood is a truly captivating, wild and African place and I realize how I've grown to love it.

**African time** and particularly our continuous free ascent is the high point of my climbing career. So far. Indeed, it is a high point of my life. When we walk out early the next morning on Valentine's day, with the towering wall behind us, the high that I feel is something like being newly in love, that delectable feeling when you realize: she loves me too.

*The 8 pitches of African Time go at grades 20; 21; 21; 23; 25; 22; 21. It is hard to be objective about something you've fallen for, but I reckon it's a pretty good route. (Snort agrees)>*

**Johann Lanz afloat in a sea of rock on the awesome pitch 4 (21) during the first continual free ascent of African Time (25), Yellowwood Amphitheatre. Photo: Robert Zipplies**

**Johann Lanz approaching the top of pitch 4, with 4 more to go. African Time (25), Yellowwood Amphitheater. PHOTO: Rob Zipplies**





***Willem Le Roux cranking the crux pitch of African Time (25) Yellowwood Amphitheater.***  
***Photo: Charles Edelstein***



# ARMAGEDDON TIME 23+

Ross Suter

The inspiration was drawn from the timeless, serene magic of the Du Toit's Kloof mountains, and the attraction was the challenging walls that tower proudly on either side of the valley. The motivation was spurred by the conviction that climbing is an integral part of the total mountaineering experience, and the initiative provided by the positive approach of Gordon and Jonathan. Their reports on the potential for new routes up the wall, on their return from doing 'Time Warp', fuelled our enthusiasm to the point of ignition. But, time was running out fast as Jonathan's navy call-up date was approaching rapidly, and Varsity holidays were drawing to an end. There was no time to waste.

Kitted out for three days in the hills with more than enough gear, we headed up the long steep walk-in, our over-laden sacks slowing us to a crawl! On reaching the spectacular bivvy spot at the base of the amphitheatre, we collapsed and slept till mid-afternoon. Later we started the route, establishing three good pitches before rapping off in half light.

The rain woke us the next morning early shattering our hopes as the weather deteriorated. The wind lashed violently on the flanking ridges. Already drenched, we juggled up the fixed ropes to retrieve our gear. We then packed swiftly, and numbly began the downward slide to the road. Much later in the warmth of the car, we reflected on the valuable experience and, undeterred, vowed to return to complete the route.

So, two weeks later, we found ourselves retracing our moves up the wall, and continued to push two more classic pitches that took us up to the half-way ledge for a late lunch. The rest of the afternoon was spent tentatively probing the blank and bulging headwall above in an unsuccessful attempt to trace a line of weakness through it. We eventually retreated down Smalblaar Ridge, and onward down again!

Frustratingly, the headwall emerged victorious that day having brushed even aid attempts aside, so we were forced to descend the mountain in darkness. For the second time, nature had cast down the gauntlet, asserting its supremacy and demanding respect. This further strengthened our determination, but it was only three months later, when Jonathan had his first pass, that we were able to return to take up the challenge again.

From the halfway ledge, we finally managed to pull through for two further pitches. Then the storm broke. The cloud bank which we had been watching apprehensively for a while had moved in, and the distant rolls of thunder were suddenly crashing loudly all around us, accompanied by blinding flashes of lightning at close proximity. A hasty abseil took us down to the ledge where we traversed off to access the Smalblaar Ridge descent. Bitterly cold and disillusioned, we made our way carefully in the dark and wet to the car below.

For the third time, nature's ever-present hazards had been revealed to us.

Winter was approaching and Jonathan could not get leave, so Gordon and I returned to finish the route with a further two spectacular pitches, on the first possible weekend with favourable weather. The sense of achievement on reaching the top was overwhelming, and we experienced a serene internal calm, like the tranquil stillness after a violent storm. We hovered briefly on top before racing down the descent against the oncoming darkness.

Armageddon Time is a classic route in every respect. We deeply appreciated the taxing situations it threw across our path, and all learnt an incredible amount from these invaluable experiences. The memories linger on and the route stands proud in its spectacular surroundings ... waiting.



Roughly 200 m right of 'Time Warp' (i.e. 75 m right of right-hand clump of trees), below and right of the prominent understepped overhangs, is a slightly raised ledge. The climb starts up a shallow open book that leads up to the left-hand extreme of the narrow band of overhangs.

**Pitch 1:** 40 m '19' (G1): Ascend then open book, sneaking up left around roof. Move back right into break which is climbed to small ledge.

**Pitch 2:** 30 m '19' (G1): Walk 12 m left and climb a shallow recess to a large ledge. Stance below the corner on left.

**Pitch 3:** 45 m '20' (G2): Climb the right-facing corner to the base of the under-stepped roofs. Traverse right and up (15 m) on a series of rails until possible to move up on pockets to a blank open book. An easier sequence is to move back left into the corner at this point. Climb up to take the easy break left through the roof to a large ledge above.

**Pitch 4:** 17 m '21' (G2): Turn the roof to climb left-facing corner, then traverse right to sloping stance beneath a corner.

**Pitch 5:** 45 m '21' (G2): Step down and rail right under the roof. Step across the void (thin) and climb the flake system above to a ledge on the right. Ascend the corner above and exit onto a superb ledge. Climb up on good holds to the huge ledge halfway up the amphitheatre. (Pitch 4 and 5 can be combined with 60m ropes)

The route now continues up the large headwall to the right of the huge broken recess. Walk 80 m right to a small corner with a large flake at its base. Five metres to the right, adjacent to a higher ledge is an obvious short layback-crack.

**Pitch 6.** 45 m '23+' (H1): Place a high cam and climb the crack and move left and up onto the ramp past the old fixed nut. Continue diagonally left to a short, steep left-facing corner. Layback a few moves and stretch onto the wall above (hard). Continue up to a ledge.

**Pitch 7:** 40m '19' (G1): Step down and climb left and up to a short flake till one moves left under the roof past a small block ledge, and left to a stance 4 m diagonally higher.

**Pitch 8:** 42 m '20' (G2): Move up right and climb the break, through the small overhangs and up the crack to a small stance on the left. Or climb more easily around the overhangs on the left.

9: 45 m '19' (G1): Ascend the crack to ledge. Go right on good grey rock to a ledge. Pull through the bulge 3 m left of chossy crack to finish up a short crack to the summit.

Descent: Walk down the slope a-top the amphitheatre left (east) for about 15 minutes to the [Timerity Abseil](#)





***Tony Dick (age 64) on the 3<sup>rd</sup> pitch of Armageddon Time Nov 2012. Photo: C Edelstein***





***Dave Vallet on the 6<sup>th</sup> pitch of Armageddon Time***



# Ordure Time

A Kak Storie by Stewart Middlemiss

Jeremy Colenso, Kevin Smith and I set off one weekend in March 1988 to do an early repeat of a new country test piece, ***Armageddon Time***. The weather forecast was not very encouraging and we left Cape Town in blustery conditions. By the time we drove over Du Toit's Kloof pass (in the pre-tunnel days) it was drizzling. The hike up to Yellowwood Amphitheatre in the dark was unpleasant; wet, slippery and scratchy in the predawn coolth, but we were very keen to climb, so we persevered.

At the base of the wall we waited for a while under some small overhangs to see if the rain would stop. At the end of the allotted time things still looked bleak, but we were getting cold so we decided to climb anyway and see if conditions would improve higher up. We struggled on the first pitches and had to resort to a few points of aid because the wet lichen covered rock had similar friction characteristics to soap. The clouds thickened and the rain grew more persistent as we foolishly carried on.

By the time we got to the big ledge a few pitches up, the heavens opened and put paid to any ideas of continuing. Abseiling off into the deluge also did not have much appeal. We were protected from precipitation at this point by the big overhangs above so we elected to wait for a break in the weather before running for home. We amused ourselves by opening two short harder pitches of the ledge; a finger-tip crack and a steep technical corner, both about 24ish.

When the rain abated a little, we traversed to the left-hand end of the ledge to descend. On pulling the ropes across to our stance, one of them became snagged under a small pile of rocks and had to be tugged with some vigour to free it. Imagine our horror when the rope arrived with a 2m section in the middle stained dark brown and stinking of human excrement. The little pile of rocks was a cairn marking the spot where some renowned Cape Climber (who will remain nameless; the incident was a long time ago and I am no longer vengeful) had marked his trophy spot. The problem was, we now had to abseil on these same ropes and wet as it was, there was no possibility of downclimbing.

Seeing as the ropes were mine, I had to deal with the problem. Belayed, I traversed out onto the slab and harvested a few Aloes, which I beat to a pulp with a rock and then used to scrub the offending section of rope mightily until it regained its prior red colour. We then retreated back to the ground, water spraying from the wet ropes. We tried to avoid touching the noxious section of rope by letting go when passing it, but couldn't do anything about the colour change of the liquid that sprayed out in our faces as we passed. Back in Cape Town, the first stop was a laundromat where the ropes got a thorough washing.

Next weekend we went back for revenge. In warm pleasant conditions, everything went smoothly without incident and we topped out around lunch time. This time we climbed on Kevin's ropes, which he insisted on bringing. I don't think mine were ever trusted again ...



# JUDGEMENT DAY 25

**Judgment Day. Photo Hilton Davies**

**Article about the first ascent** [Judgment Day – A Gnarly New Route on the Yellowwood Amphitheatre](#)

This route is on the right side of the amphitheatre, lying to the right of Armageddon Time and Second Coming (hence the apocalyptic name) on the steep walls close to the easy-angled Smalblaar Ridge. There are two key features. One pitch below the halfway ledge is an enormous roof, perhaps the biggest on the amphitheatre, which the route turns on the right. Above the halfway ledge lie three vertical fins. The route uses the left one.

**Start:** At the clump of trees against the wall at the top right. Begin by scrambling up on the left over easy broken grey rock.

## **Pitch 1 35m 19:**

Head up and right to an obvious vertical crack. Start up this crack then angle up leftwards to a whitish-yellow recess below a small roof. Get around the roof on the right then head straight up a crack to just a few metres below the big, long roof system. Stance on a small ledge a few metres off to the left.

## **Pitch 2 20m 20:**

Move back to the crack system then traverse right on a steep orange wall that has an obvious big rail and pockets on the face. At 7m the rail turns around a corner and ends. Out of sight of the belayer keep traversing at the same level but now on dark rock under a roof for a further 5m. On an open face continue traversing right for another 6m until reaching a crack system leading up. Head up to the big ledge.

Walk along the ledge to the right. Pass the white sandy corner after 4 metres and continue another 4 metres to a break in the roof. Stance here.

## **Pitch 3 15m 19:**

Crank through the roof and head straight up the clean crack to reach a ledge.

## **Pitch 4 40m 22:**

On the ledge move left for a couple of metres then step over the void. Climb up the sustained and unrelenting crack including overcoming a couple of small roofs. Do a long pitch to reach a small ledge on the left about six metres below the Great Roof.

## **Pitch 5 15m 22:**

To the right is a steep and intimidating reddish face. Head up and right on this overhanging face to reach a big undercling flake (Very nice to have a Camelot no. 4 here!). Up this flake then the crack above it to reach the roof where it ends on the right. Turn the corner of the roof to get onto a small ledge.

## **Pitch 7 35m 19:**

Straight up for a few metres then move out leftwards for a couple of metres to gain a little crack system that heads up the clean grey faces that are directly above the enormous roof. Beautiful face climbing takes you to the halfway ledge. From the ledge continue up a few metres to the left to get on top of the large platform to stance. (The Armageddon crux pitch is immediately left)

## **Pitch 7 30m 25, A1:**

On the platform move up and across to the right. Directly above is a big crack system with a massive protruding flake. This is the Armageddon Wimp-Out pitch. Judgment Day takes the overhanging orange wall to the right. Head up the unrelenting overhanging wall using the parallel



vertical cracks that lead to the grey arête on the right after about 25 metres. Stance around the arête to the right.

**Pitch 8 45m 20:**

Nice easy climbing leads directly up for 20 metres to a ledge. Then summon your courage and step off the ledge to the left over the void and delicately get up to a rail and gear a few metres higher. Rail 5m right then up cracks and a detached block. Stance a couple of metres above a big chockstone.

**Pitch 9 30m 19:**

Climb the bottomless chimney slot with the chock-stone wedged in it at the top. Step left and head up the crack system until forced to move left using edges to get across into the off-width that becomes a perfect finger crack. Head up to the overlap then move a few metres to a comfortable ledge on the left. The 'Changing Cracks' pitch.

**Pitch 10 25m 16:**

Climb up to a ledge and step right. Balance up the gearless face for a bit to get to a small horn. Up the magnificent 'Handlebars' Pitch to the summit!

**First Ascent:** Hilton Davies and Guy Paterson-Jones, 12 January 2012. Pitches 1-2 first climbed by Hilton and Alan Ross on 31 March 2010. Pitches 3-6 first climbed by Hilton and Bruce Daniel on 8 April 2010. Pitches 7-10 first climbed by Hilton and Karl Hayden on 16 March 2011.

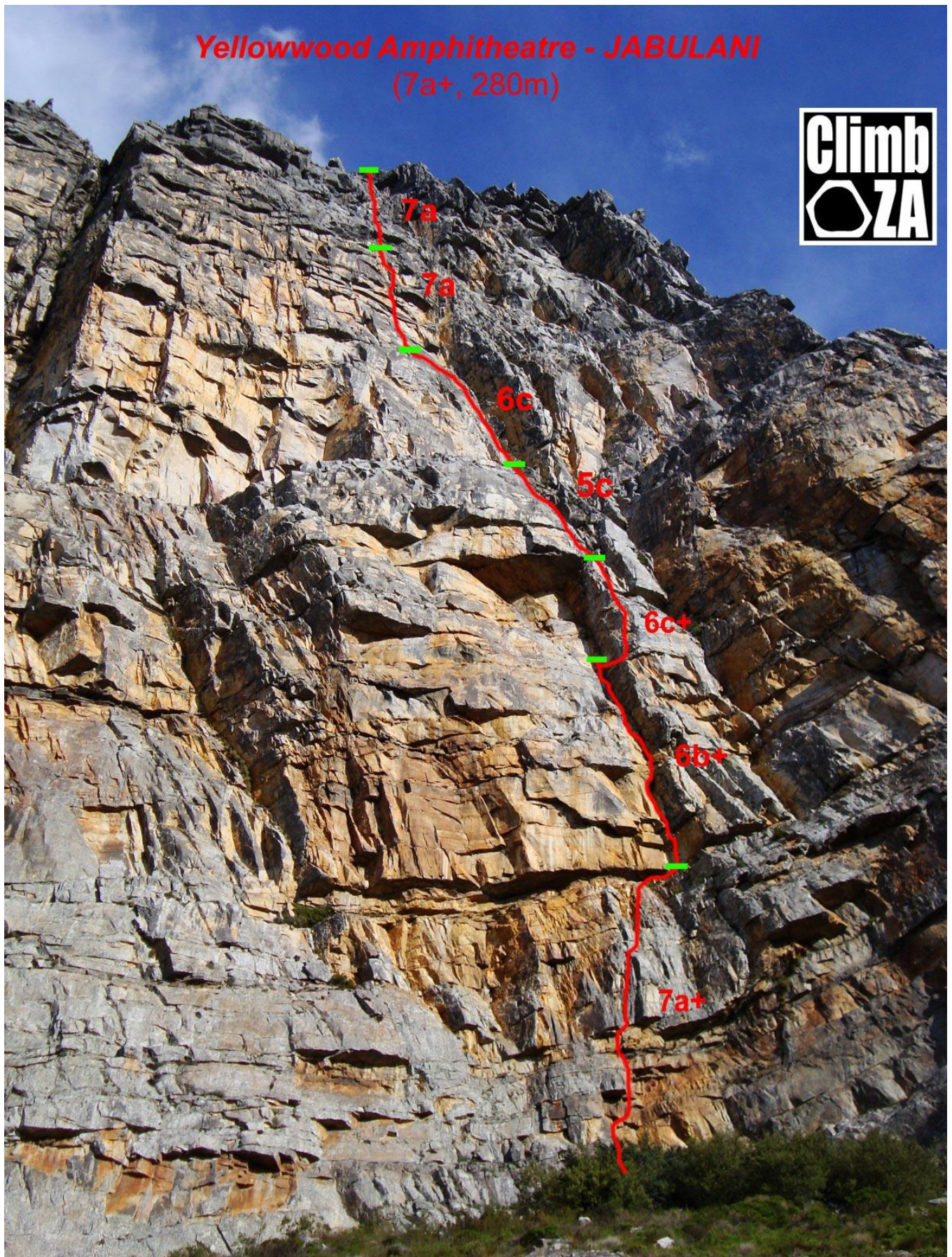
**Descent:** Smallblaar/Chess pieces gulley or Timerity Abseil or Down Time

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## JABULANI 26

<http://www.climbing.co.za/2010/10/new-route-jabulani-at-yellowwood-amphitheatre/#lightbox/3/>





# Yellowwood Amphitheatre

FA: Gerhard FIEGL  
Johannes STEIDL  
September 2010

Gear: 1x Set small cams  
1x Set Cams (0.5-2 double)  
1x Set Nuts

Parking: R Toits Kloof Lodge (N1)  
(ca. 1h from Cape Town)

Walking: ↑ ~ 2h  
↓ ~ 1.5h

Descent: Rappel (Pitch 7-5) to big ledge  
Traverse to the Descent Rappel (left)  
Rappel again 3 times

Descent RAPPEL  
by Charles  
Edelstein

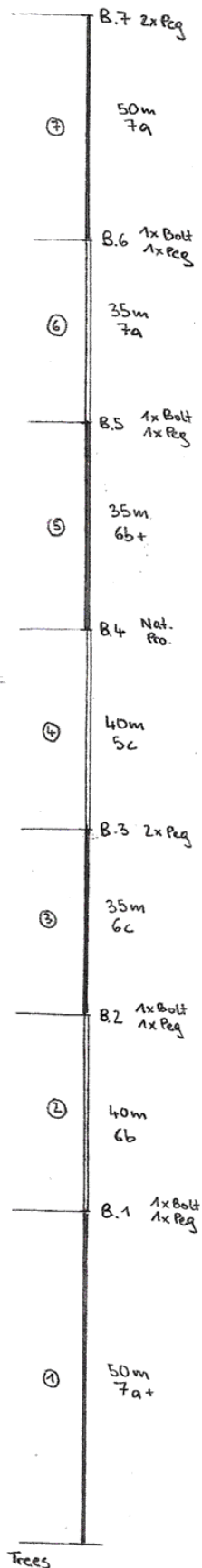
Chain 60M!

Chain 60M!

Gold

Height: 280Hm

# Jabulani



**Start:** The start is on the left side of the yellow part of the wall below a big corner on the right side of the Amphitheatre, directly above the yellowwood trees on a ledge and is marked by a cairn.



**Pitch 1:** 50m 7a+. There are two handcracks seen from the bottom, follow the right one on the right side of a small roof. Climb up a bit leftwards to a horizontal finger crack under a small roof. Place some pro and fight your way up through a slab on very small holds. Head on to the right and bottom of the big yellow corner.

**Pitch 2:** 40m 6b. Squeeze through the initial part of the corner and head on up following this corner, sometimes a bit left of it on fingerholes until you reach the 2nd belay.

**Pitch 3:** 35m 6c. Traverse 1m below the belay to the right, out of the corner and climb up the edge on some exposed moves until you reach the next belay (on a small ledge just above the big roof on the right side, in the corner again).

**Pitch 4:** 40m 5c. From the belay step out left side of the corner and find your way up to the "half way" Ledge.

**Pitch 5:** 35m 6c. Climb up on the left side of the big corner (also climbed as an alternative to the Armageddon pitch) to the next belay a bit on the left side on a small ledge. (1x bolt + 1x peg).

**Pitch 6** 35m 7a. Follow the natural obvious structure upwards slightly leading to the left side. Climb some slab moves and two small roofs until you reach the belay under a roof at a bolt and peg belay.

**Pitch 7:** 55m 7a. Pull through the roof on nice holds (a bit exposed) to finally reach the last and not so steep (55m) part of the wall. The last 40m contain, if climbing straight, some nice cracks and steeper sections directly to the belay on the ridge (two pegs), which is directly above the belay of pitch 6.

**DESCENT:** Head east (left) down the slope above the main amphitheatre to **Timerity Abseil** or the Chess Pieces gulley to the right.

## SMALLBLAAR 16

A Klein Winterhoek clone, with genetic pitch aberrations on a sensational knife edge.

**Start** Approach via Yellowwood Ravine. This is well marked from the road with cairns. Start below the large electrical pylon situated to the right of the ravine and then follow the cairns to the Divine Time Buttress water drip or continue directly to the middle base of the main amphitheatre following a trail.

From there walk west (right) on a rising (vague path) to the right sky-line, Continue round the corner and then on for about 50m to a point that you can scramble up left to the base of the gendarme. Skirt the gendarme on its left (east or amphitheatre side) and belay at the point where the gendarme meets the ridge.

### Description

*Replace pitch 1, below with this: To reach the large halfway ledge on Yellowwood Amphitheater from the grassy spot below the gendarme, takes about 70 meters of climbing (2 pitches), up to grade F1. Take the obvious line, pretty much on the ridge line. At the Yellowwood half way ledge, you will then be at the point where pitch 2 in the original description below starts.*

**Pitch 1:** 30m 15. Climb up a prominent fault to the left of the crest.



**Pitch 2:** 40m 14. Continue more or less on the crest to a large ledge system that is the right edge of the halfway ledge that traverses the Amphitheatre

**Pitch 3:** 55m 16. The smooth grey face is climbed using the left-hand of the two prominent cracks. (An excellent but harder alternative (at grade 19) from the halfway ledge is to move right around the corner and climb the excellent corner crack above.)

Move up to an overhang, straddle around the rib to the left and continue to the foot of a bottomless crack. Climb up the bottomless crack to a stance at the foot of a chimney. (A more aesthetic and less thrutchy finish at grade 19 is to move round to the right and climb into the right facing corner scoop above and then back left to avoid the bottomless crack.

**Pitch 4:** 25m 12. Ascend the chimney past a large chockstone and scramble to a stance at the top of the climb.

R Davies, J de Villiers-Graaf, M P Mamacos and F Villa 1953

Variations: C Edelstein and Willem Le Roux 2016

### **Descent:**

The quickest descent is down the [Timerity Abseil](#). This abseil descent route is situated on the right (South-West) edge of the Timerity buttress. Have a good look where it starts when at the bottom. From the top of Yellowwood amphitheatre head east along the top to where it descends to a depression (10 minutes from Smalblaar). Two features then become visible to guide you. The first one is a huge boulder complex adjacent to a lone pine tree. The next is a large boulder complex that is left (North of this tree). Timerity abseil point is left (due North) of and more or less in line with these two points. Head towards the left boulder complex and curve left (North) heading down and look for stone cairns that will lead you to the abseil point.

The abseil point is visible by a long double loop of red rope that connects a peg to a two bolt station.

An alternative is to use the ["Chess Piece Gulley"](#). Walk over the top of the amphitheatre and down to the right into the first walled gully that runs down between the first chess piece and the Smalblaar Ridge buttress. Scrambling and 3 short abseils brings you to the base of the gully (water spot during wetter times of year) and a path back to the bivvy cave. From there head north to round the ridge to return to the base of the main Yellowwood amphitheatre.





**Du Toits Kloof Country Climbing - Justin Lawson (trying to remember how to jam) on Smallblar Ridge, Du Toits Kloof (F2/16). Photo by: Riki Lawson**



## NICE TIME 160M 21 \*\*\*\*

Yellowwood right supporting buttress to *Smalblaar ridge*,

Some years ago Tony Dick, Andy Alcock and I, Snort, walked up to Yellowwood to do Armageddon Time. We realized that the day was a high gravity day and instead snuck round the corner to do "No More Bells" 19. Always on the lookout for a new line I suggested to Tony we climb one of the lines on the supporting buttress just right of the Smalblaar ridge. He dismissed the idea saying that the angle was too easy and the rock too juggy. High up I had noticed an impressive looking headwall with a crack system splitting it and I was convinced by him that indeed this is a project to be deferred once the harder routes had all been climbed. We had a good time on No More Bells although I considered it a lot of effort to walk up there to do an easy 4 pitch route.

More recently, I, with Dark Horse and Dave Vallet, have been working on a route on the main amphitheatre which was called Half Time, but is now at Three Quarters and is a pitch or two from the top i.e 55m. To finish the route would include 3 options. The least savoury would be to finish up the grotty right corner, the second option would be to climb a corner crack system to the left and the final option to climb improbable overhanging aesthetic rock further left.

As I thought that as I was relatively unfit, my rotator cuff was impinging in my left shoulder, my DIP joint of my ring finger was having an arthritic flare up and I was climbing with Dave who lamented as to his own unfitness, we could race up the "easy" route to the right of Smalblaar and then rap down the last quarter of what would be called Full Time to check it out.

So in preparation for the putsch Margaret and I acceded to a dinner invitation at the Straughans. As they both have proper day jobs, **and**, the Wetspups athletics day only finished at 20h00, the multi-course dinner lubricated by a variety of alcoholic beverages kept us there till well after 10pm when I managed to sidle away to get some sleep.

Then Dave arrives early at 02h30 with an sms that he is the enemy at my gate! We had agreed to meet at 04h00!

Walking up YW in the dark is not really fun.

So around 07h00 we arrive at the base of the buttress and quickly realize that the climbing is much steeper than we perceived before. We pick the cleanest, easiest line and Dave leads off. He puts together a nice pitch at around grade 19. I then climb the next section that comes together like a jig saw puzzle at grade 20/21. Funky varied moves that start off a keyed in flake, pulls through a steep overlap and then finished up a long face with pro and holds unfolding just as you need them. The next pitch is a short scramble on lichen covered rock to a point where 3 lines start. I choose the steep chimney crack on the right and this delivers a stunning pitch (20) with crack climbing ending up in a cool classic and easy chimney.

We attain a ledge and high above us is the spectacular overhanging headwall. I am cowering in the shade of a corner when Dave sets off and climbs a steep, tricky crack system that entails marginal stemming moves at grade 21 and then after another short steep crack section we attain the base of the headwall.

We were stymied. To climb the headwall is a serious undertaking as it is undercut, wickedly overhanging and with a lack of decent holds and no obvious pro in places. So much for "easy and juggy". Our final pitch had actually ended just to the right of it and we could easily walk off. The headwall requires an inspection on top rope by us "really good mediocre" climbers and we left it for another day.

We then scooted around to rap down ***Fantastic Time*** and this went nicely until we tried to pull down the rope. Dave realized he had left the ropes to fall into a crack and they got stuck. So up he went 55m on prussics and he then flicked the ropes to the rap anchors on Down Time while I waited below getting frazzled in the hot sun. (I could scramble along a ledge system to the 2<sup>nd</sup> set of rap anchors on Down Time.)

We got down and then after a hasty cup of tea bombed down as I had to play at Faye's 40<sup>th</sup>.

I got to the party at 20h45 and ended up having a great time till around 01h00. And as if that was not enough Margaret and I proved Shakespeare wrong and continued partying at home for another hour or so.

Content and satisfied, I for the first time in my adult life, managed to sleep in till 11h00 on Sunday morning.

### ***Nice Time (21)***

**START** The route starts in the middle of the buttress supporting Smalblaar ridge on the right. Walk round from YW amphitheatre, round the large genderme, as if going to the descent gully and Chess Pieces. Scramble up the easiest obvious grassy ledge system to start at a crack (cairn in place.)

**Pitch 1:** 30m (19) Climb the crack to a blocky ledge 5m. Move left 2m and turn the overhang on the left and step right onto the face and climb up to a good stance. Belay to the right of the keyed in flake.

**Pitch 2:** 35m (20/21) Climb up carefully using the flake till standing on it. Pull through the overlap and attain easier ground. Traverse left to and then up on the left arête. Climb diagonally up with lay back moves to exit with a mantelshelf move on lichen covered rock. Belay on a small ledge system.

**Pitch 3:** 20m (18) Climb the crack on the left and scramble up to belay on a good ledge below the obvious chimney crack on the right.

**Pitch 4:** 45m (20) Climb the yellow- red rock to attain the chimney. Continue onto easier bushy terrain and belay on the left next to large blocks.

**Pitch 5:** 35m (21). Climb over the blocks and continue straight up steep cracks using stemming moves to a ledge. Belay here or continue up the crack system tending to the left to climb through the overlap. (18).

Scramble off right or have a go at the Headwall pitch on the left if you are really bold and strong.

First Ascent Charles Edelstein and Dave Vallet 5 February 2011

Descent. The [Chess Pieces gully](#) descent is just down to the right. It is probably quicker and easier to do the [Timerity Abseil](#) descent as it gets you to water. Walk east over the top and then along the sloping top to the Timerity Abseil (15 minutes).





**Charles Edelstein (Snort) on the second pitch of Nice Time:** Photo David Vallet Nov 2011



**Charles Edelstein (Snort) on the fifth pitch of Nice Time:** Photo David Vallet Nov 2011

## TIME OUT 160m 21 \*\*\*\*

**Start:** The route is situated just to the right of **Nice Time** on the back-set buttress supporting **Smalbaar Ridge** on its west side. The **Descent Gulley** is to the right and further back. Walk up Yellowwood ravine to the centre of the base of the main Amphitheatre, and then contour right as if to go to **Smalblaar** or the **Chess Pieces**. The **Nice Time Buttress** comes into view as you round the corner of Smalblaar ridge.

**Pitch 1:** 50m (17) Start at cairn and find your way up on juggy weathered rock at the first small overhang, then up the recess to bypass the large overhang on the left. Continue to a good ledge under an overhang.

**Pitch 2:** 15m (21) Crank straight through to attain an off-width crack. Ideally have a Camelot 3.4 extra. Do a difficult move past the choc stone to a ledge.

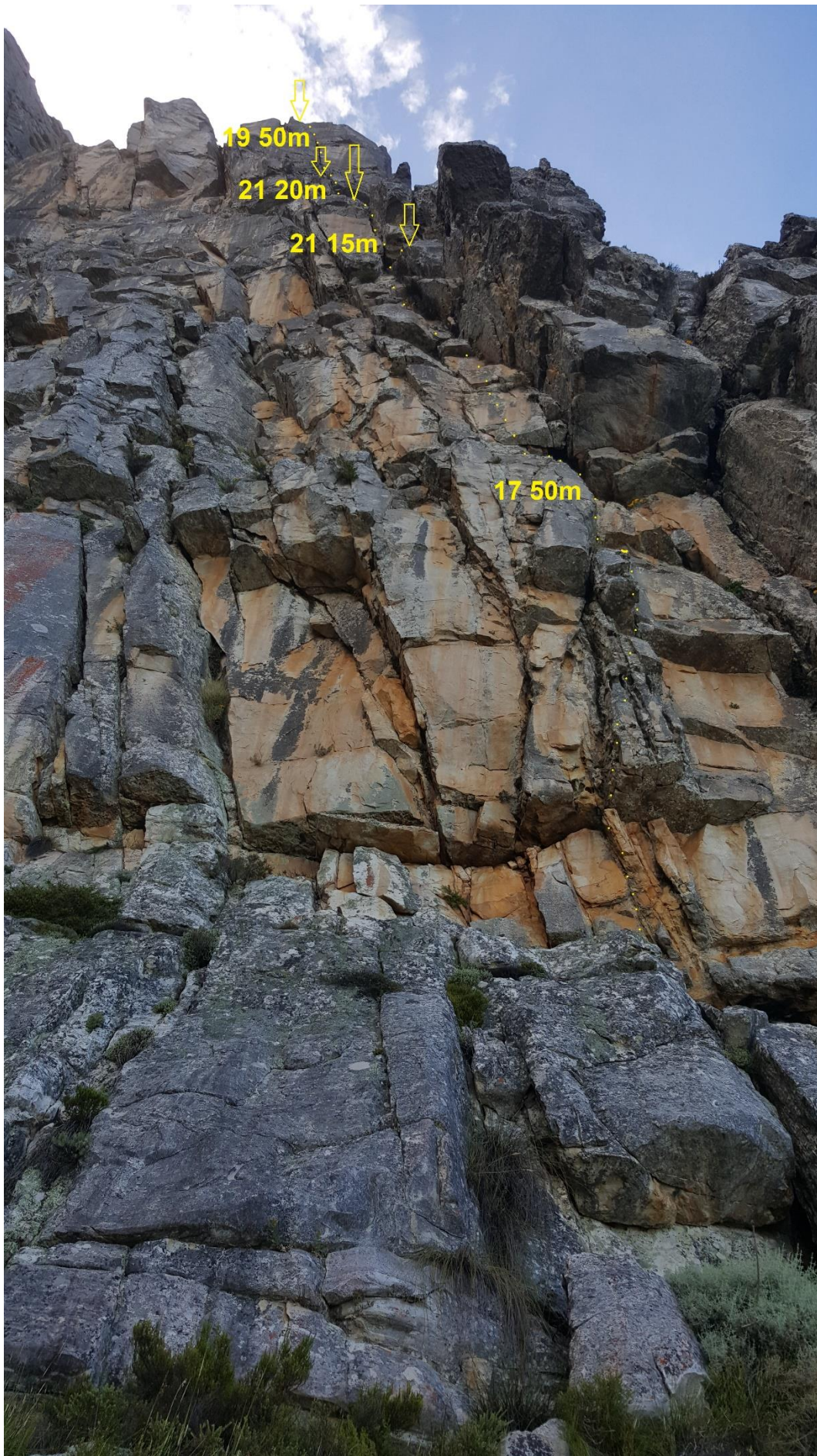
**Pitch 3:** 20m (20) Climb directly up the grey recess on fins of rock slightly to the left to where it steepens and then do a strenuous lay-back move to the right. Climb more easily to a ledge.

**Pitch 4:** 50m (19) Do a crank on jugs to leave the ledge which is undercut and climb the water channel to stance on blocks. (***This pitch is very striking when viewed from Smalblaar ridge as one rounds the corner from the Amphitheatre. It has been climbed in the past by amongst others Tini Versfeld and Dave Birkett.***)

**Pitch 5:** 25m (17) Move to the left and down and find your way up the recess to the top.

**Descent:** The **descent gulley** is probably the quickest unless you have reason to go past the **Snotter camp** at the base of the **Divine Time Buttress**.





***First Ascent: C Edelstein and Brent Russel December 15 2016***





***Brent Russel on the last pitch of Time Out: Photo C Edelstein***



# CHESS PIECES

## THE CASTLE LEFT TURRET.



**Castle left turret:** Photo courtesy of Robert Zipplies

## IN YOUR HONOUR 150m 24 \*\*\*\*(\*)

The route follows a line up the left side of the “**The Castle**,” the grey tower immediately right of Smalblaar ridge.

Climb the first pitch of No More Bells up to the big ledge. The route starts off the left end of this ledge, just adjacent to the pleasantly cool descent gully. There are two obvious corner systems. “**In Your Honour**” takes the prominent right-hand recess. Start at the base of the right tending grey corner that has a large floating-shield half way up.

**Pitch 1:** 22m (19). Step up into the layback corner and climb up past a small roof to stance in a scoop below the floating-shield. Note the gear is slim at the stance!

**Pitch 2:** 33m (17). Step 1m right out of the scoop and continue up the layback/corner. Climb up past the right side of the floating-shield and into the steepening grove above. Balance over the ramp and then climb the chimney that splits a large block to the ledge above. NOTE: If you have 60m ropes, it is possible to combine the first two pitches to create a 55m pitch. It is also possible to retreat from here via either an abseil prong on the left side of the base of the chimney or it looks possible to traverse left along the ledge back into the descent gully.

**Pitch 3:** 16m (21). Step down and rail out right until directly under a peapod groove. Pull up into the groove (exciting) and exit right at the top. Round the corner, move a meter right then crank up on edges to access a small ledge below a roof. Stance Here.

**Pitch 4:** 23m (23). Climb the crack on the right edge of the roof. Pull up into the left facing corner above (Crux.) A swing left on the face above allows you access to the steepening corner above. Climb up to stance on a large vegetated ledge.

**Pitch 5:** 40m (24). NOTE small wires are essential here! Step left off the large ledge and back into the grove. Climb up and then balance left moving into the left of the two corners above. Climb up and left across the blank face and then back right and up under the small triangular roof. Pull over the roof and onto the apron. Hard and thin! Climb up and to the right of a brown water streak/scoop. Below the large roofs traverse left with feet at the level of the brown water scoop. Delicate footwork! Move left to stance on a large ledge, left of the big roofs. NOTE! The water-scoop might be wet after heavy rains!

**Pitch 6:** 20m (17). This final pitch starts off a block below a layback/water worn groove. Step off the block and climb the rib then the face to the top.

*FA: Malcolm Gowans & Robert Zipplies; October 2009.*

## NO MORE BELLS 150m 19 \*\*\*\*\*

According to the editor of the MCSA journal in which the route description is published, a possibly similar route was opened by John Moss, Richard Smithers and Ed Marais in the '70s. The route was climbed and described by David Davies and Allan Ross in March 1992. No More Bells does indeed deserve the accolades it has received over the years and is a fine outing at the grade.

**START:** ‘No More Bells’ is on the first “**Chess Piece**” the “**Castle**” that comes into view when rounding Smalblaar ridge. It starts at the left facing corner marked by a cairn 40m or so past the descent gully past the huge chock-stone obstruction.

**Pitch 1:** 45m “F2” (15) Climb up from the cairn for 3m. Move right up the corner for 2m. Move right on to the white face with big Cape jugs to a big ledge.



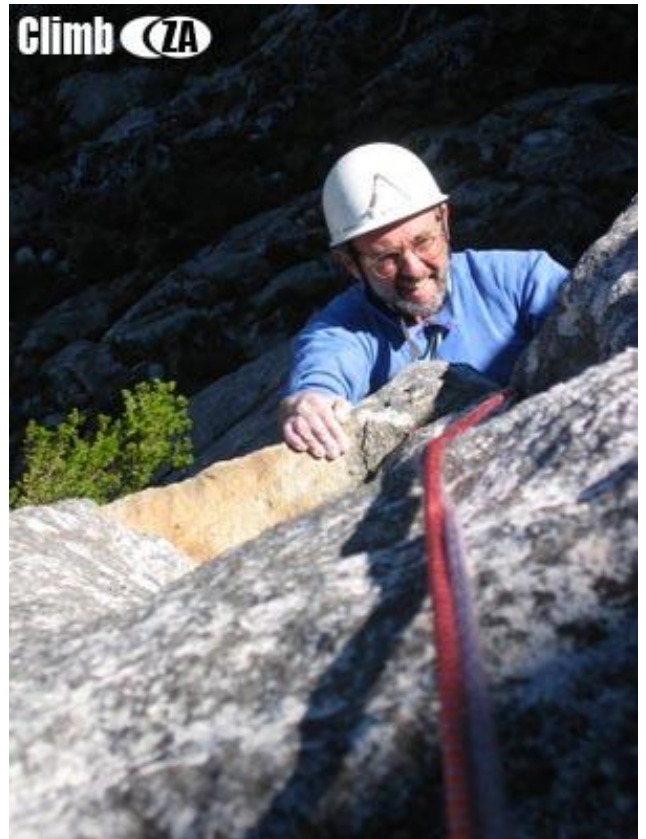
**Pitch 2:** 45m “G1” (19) Walk 10m left to a cairn of stones. Climb the obvious crack to the left of a left facing recess. The crack runs out half way. Escape on to the face on small holds to a ledge.

**Pitch 3** 25m “G1” (19) Move to the right then up a crack. Step around the corner to a ledge below an overhang.

**Pitch 4** 45m “G1” (19) Climb up to the base of the roof and move left on flakes to a break through the roof. Once over the roof head out right to the edge of the buttress. Climb up a thin orange crack to a stance.

**Pitch 5** 45m “G1” (19) Climb the crack to a jamb crack, then through a small roof and up a series of cracks to the top.

**New final pitch:** 25m (20): The route previously ended on the prominent walk-off ledge. A new pitch was added to finish at the summit. This pitch heads up the white face using the slightly overhanging recess with a razor sharp vertical flake. At the first overlap head up left and then with balancy moves head out left to the break in the big roof above. Tricky and serious.



**Jonathan Levy pulling the roof on Pitch 3 No More Bells.** Photo: Brent Russel Oct 2008

First Ascent final pitch: Hilton Davies, Bruce Daniel and Neil Havenga, November 2009.

First recorded ascent of **No More Bells**: Dave Davies and Allan Ross, March 1992

## **BELLS AND WHISTLES 125m 22 \*\*\*\***

**START:** Climb the first pitch of **No More Bells** up to the big ledge. From here the route follows an independent line close to the right edge of the buttress climbed by **No More Bells**. The route starts about 6m to the left of the massive gully dividing the two faces of the **Castle**, and 8m below and just right of two square, stepped roofs. Belay in front of a two meter wide detached flake.

**Pitch 1:** 36m, 19. Starting at the cairn, climb the crack leading up to righthand edge of the two stepped roofs. Break through leftwards (strenuous) using an undercling hold on the right-facing corner in the overhangs and up through the roofs. Continue up the crack, at one point choosing either a left or a right crack up to a semi-hanging stance on a few gargoyles. Stance at the right side of the buttress close to the edge of the gully just left of a small roof below the middle crack going through the overhanging rock.

**Pitch 2:** 20m, 19. The overhanging crack awaits an ascent. Climb the crack left of the overhanging crack using holds on left, then up and

rightwards with some strenuous moves towards the continuation of the right-hand crack (it is possible to step right earlier to an obvious undercling hold, and continue up the crack from there). Continue climbing this through overhanging rock up into easier terrain trending right. Stance on a series of small ledges on the arête.

**Pitch 3:** 20m, 20. Climb the easy cracks facing into the gulley up to the left end of a long narrow roof, where you can break through using jams and/or laybacks (the No More Bells crux on pitch 4 is just around the corner to the left). Continue climbing for a few metres and stance (semi-hanging) 5m higher up close to the arête and about 4m below the next roof.

**Pitch 4:** 50m, 22. Climb up leftwards around the roof (airy move). Proceed up the crack via a series of rails, which includes a harder move. When the crack closes out, delicately step out right a few metres across a slabby face to a small left-facing corner. Pull up on thin holds (crux; and gear a little sparse). From here the grade eases and it is possible to scramble up to the finishing ledge (where No More Bells ends) just below the summit overhang.

Firs Ascent: Stephen Davis & Robert Zipplies; March 2010.

**Descent:** Walk to the east and descend via **Chess Piece Gulley** or **Timerity Abseil** if you intend to visit the water point.

## **GIRL NEXT DOOR 150M 24 \*\*\*\***

**START:** As for “**No More Bells**” first pitch about 40m right of the huge chock-stone at the base of the **Chess Piece Gulley**.

**Pitch 1:** 45m “F2” 17 Climb up from the cairn for 3m. Move right up the corner for 2m. Move right on to the white face with big Cape jugs to a big ledge. (Common with “No More Bells.”)

The route now continues roughly in the middle of the wall from the upper ledge, to the right of “No More Bells”. It crosses “**No More Bells**” near that route's second stance and climbs the rest of the wall between that route and “**In Your Honour**”. Right of centre there is a high, rectangular recess (yellow at the top), capped by a roof. On the face to the left of the recess, and right of a prominent left-facing corner, there are a number of vertical cracks. The route takes the middle crack, which blanks out about 15 meters up.

**Pitch 2** 36m, 19. Climb the crack and continue for a meter or two after it blanks out to reach a rail, then move right into cracks. Continue up to a roof, pull through and then follow the right hand crack line. Avoid the slightly messy recessed part of the crack higher up by moving rightwards onto a very featured face. Stance at the top of this below the roof.

**Pitch 3 :** 40m, 21. Climb the break on the right side of the roof above and slightly left of the stance (Bells and Whistles climbs the crack 2 meters to the right) on good holds leading into a crack in a leftward facing corner, and then up easier ground onto a platform below the next steep section. Traverse left for 4 meters, up in a corner and then diagonally left on small holds to the rail below the steep rock. On the left, there is a yellow recess flanked by 2 parallel cracks. Climb these, moving right through the small roof. Follow the break above for about 8 meters to a small ledge. This pitch can be divided into two.

**Pitch 3:** 28m, 21. Climb the finger crack continuation of the break and then up easier ground above up to a ledge below the roofs. Traverse left for about 12 metres to the end of the large ledge.

**Pitch 4:** 30m, 24. From the left edge of the ledge, climb 3 meters up the break (shared with “In Your Honour” before it traverses left and up). Continue straight up through the slightly overhanging corner (strenuous). Follow the break, moving rightwards at about 15 meters and then straight up again through steep rock to stance on a small sloping ledge below where the wall steepens significantly, to the large roof at the top.

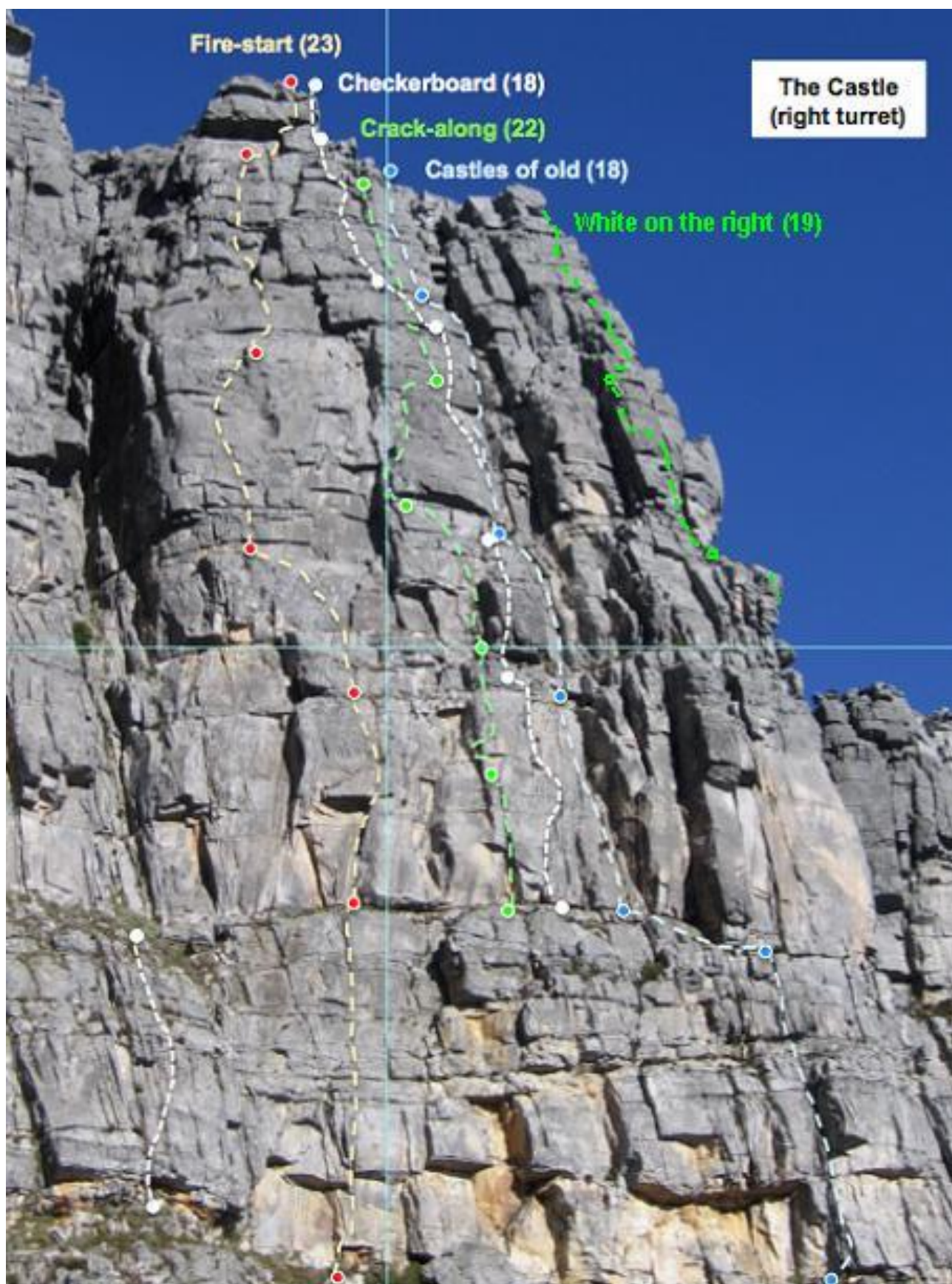
**Pitch 5:** 30m, 19. Make an airy rightward traverse in the good rail 1 meter above the ledge out to a good prong and continue traversing around the corner for about 3 meters. Climb the face above on a flake diagonally rightwards up to a rail and bush. Climb into the large crack on the



right, up for 2 meters and then onto the face to the right of the large crack, which is climbed straight up to the top.

FA: Johann Lanz & Robert Zipplies; April 2011.

## THE CASTLE, RIGHT TURRET



*Photo and topos courtesy Rob Zipplies*



## FIRE START 150M 23 \*\*\*\*

Why Fire-start? Not only does this route have a strenuously fiery start, but after trundling a few loose blocks while exploring the route, we were more than a little astonished to watch a fire merrily crackling away about a hundred metres down the slope; and this just a few days after heavy rainfall. We spent a nervous ten minutes watching the fire before it fizzled out. If it had been summer, we would have had to watch our camping gear burn in the grassy bivvy below. Beware of trundling rocks!

**START:** about 50m to the right of the first pitch of **No More Bells** and about 6m left of a massive block lying below a series of brown overhangs. The route starts below a small, vegetated left-facing corner.

**Pitch 1:** 35m, 22. Climb up two meters and where it starts getting vegetated, move right, over the arête, onto the slab and via some thin moves up to a downward facing prong. Climb up and slightly left through the break in the roof (crux). Climb the grey face above and into the arching line of weakness then up to a big ledge.

**Pitch 2** (off the big ledge): 35m, 23. Climb the hard layback crack in the left facing corner for about 8m. Pull into the open book below a triangular roof. Climb through right hand side of the roof and further up the crack. Move diagonally left onto a knobbly face and then up to a triangular vegetated ledge.

**Pitch 3:** 25m, 17. From the belay ledge move 2m up and slightly left onto another small ledge. Pull directly up past a small loose flake onto a second ledge in front of some large stacked flakes just left of a left-facing corner. Move right on the ledge and then climb up the flakes moving left toward the top of the upper flake. Traverse left and stance roughly in the middle of the ledge (cairn), below a long narrow roof.

**Pitch 4:** 45m, 20. Pull through the middle of three breaks in the small roof and climb straight up to another small roof. Pull through into a flaring crack. Continue up to a third roof where you move a metre left and up a juggy break. Tending slightly right, climb up the centre of the grey wall to a left-facing corner and (at about 40m) as that crack closes out traverse out a few metres right up a sloping crack onto a little belay ledge.

**Pitch 5:** 45m, 19. From the small stance climb up leftwards for 3 to 4 meters and up towards a narrow roof. Traverse right to access twin cracks. Climb up these onto the grey face above. Trend leftwards until you reach a big ledge. Climb the face just left of a left-facing corner trending left and then straight up through the open book above. Pull up onto a small ledge and then move higher to stance on a block about 5 meters below the massive rectangular overhang.

**Pitch 6:** 15m, 20. Climb up the left-facing open book up to the large roof. Using hand/fist jams (or the hidden rail in roof) rail right around the corner until below an off-width crack. Now you just have a few meters of strenuous squirming to putting Fire-start behind you. Enjoy.

FA: Malcolm Gowans & Rob Zipplies; October 2009.

## CRACK-ALONG 135m; 22; \*\*\*(\*)

Climb any first pitch up to the big ledge. The first pitch of **No More Bells** is described here. The route starts about 15m to the right of Fire-start's second pitch up a left-facing orange corner with a beautifully parallel, curved layback crack.

**Pitch 1:** 45m 15. Climb up from the cairn for 3m. Move right up the corner for 2m. Move right on to the white face with big Cape jugs to a big ledge.

**Pitch 2:** 15m, 22. Climb curved crack (crux moves) up into a small roof topped by a big hollow-sounding flake positioned vertically in the crack. Depending on your level of daring, either climb directly through the roof on the flake, or first traverse out right onto the face, up a few metres and then back into the crack above the flake. Climb a few more metres to a tiny stance on the left about 5 m below a small, narrow roof.

**Pitch 3:** 18m, 19. Climb to the left edge of the roof and traverse out left onto and up rounded holds for about 5 metres (protection sparse but available), before traversing right back onto the face (delicately move around the corner using pockets to place gear). Continue up crack to a sloped ledge on rounded holds. Move 2 metres right and climb up to the bottom left-hand corner of the massive dark grey block clear.

**Pitch 4:** 25m, 16. From belay climb up some bare-looking rock to two good holds, then reach through to a good hold at the bottom of a slightly flaring crack, climb the crack up to a little roof, where one can step out right onto a flake sticking out from the massive grey block. Climb up trending left to about 8 m below the long, narrow roof and then traverse to the far left to belay on top of long loose-looking blocks just below the roof.

**Pitch 5:** 25m, 21. Climb up left to the roof and pull through into the left-facing corner. Climb the layback crack for about 4m, before moving slightly right on thin holds over some blocks and upwards trending slightly rightwards to a long thin narrow ledge (sloping down leftwards).

**Pitch 6:** 50m, 18. Roughly in the middle of the long narrow belay ledge climb up a smooth looking face on thin holds and continue up until you a narrow roof. Climb through this roughly in the middle just left of a thin crack which offers good protection, and continue straight up, passing left of a blocky roof near the top.

FA: Robert Zipplies, Ian Durbach & Galeo Saintz; January 2010.

## CHECKERBOARD 160M 19 \*\*\*

*(The Castle, right turret)*

225m 18; \*\*\*\*

**Start:** from the grassy ledge below the upper rock band and about 20m left of the big break that divides the Castle into two turrets.

**Pitch1:** 35m, 18. Pull up awkwardly through the left of 2 obvious overhanging cracks. Climb up to the right of the gully then right of the overhangs to a big ledge. Walk right along the big traverse ledge until 20m from the end of this ledge.

**Pitch2:** 45m, 17. Start at the cairn immediately right of a large freestanding flake. Step off the flake and pull up on jugs through small overhangs then left to thin crack in a corner. Climb the crack and move 2m left to a stance.



**Pitch 3:** 35m, 14. Climb up rounding the overhang to the left then up the juggy face tending right to stance below a thin crack just to left of the gully.

**Pitch 4:** 45m, 18. Climb 10m up the crack to a hand and foot rail. Move left a couple of metres and then up diagonally left to the break in the overhang. Climb the face above tending right to stance below a scoop.

**Pitch 5:** 10m, 12. Traverse left up through the scoop and walk left to stance below a big crack. Crack-a-long climbs the right face of this crack.

**Pitch 6:** 40m, 14. Climb up the face to the left of the crack diagonally up to the left then back to the edge to round the overhang. Move up and left for about 5m before heading up to stance on the corner below the last tower.

**Pitch 7:** 15m, 13. Climb the corner of the ridge and up wide crack to top.

*FA: S. Adey, F. McIntosh, R. White; 12 February 2010*

# THE CASTLE 160M "F" GRADE

## Chesspiece

### A New Route on the De La Bat Ridges, Du Toit's Kloof

MICHAEL SCOTT

Chess is a game that has rightly stimulated and challenged man for thousands of years. The only way to succeed is through strategy and an ability to plan and think a number of moves in advance. Rock climbing, as many have likened it, is much akin to chess, especially the pioneering of a new route. On an unknown pitch, visualising three moves or so in advance is psychologically sound, and practical too, just as one 'sees' one's footsteps ahead when running down the mountain in order not to stumble.

Extending from Smalblaar Ridge to the right towards Du Toit's Peak there are a number of rock towers, in appearance resembling a row of chess pieces. The imagination required for this simile is enhanced when the heat haze is excessive! The towers themselves are composed of a checkerboard of slab-like, square faces of the best, hard, grey sandstone—very vertical, and very challenging!

On a crackling Saturday morning (November 5) the B.M.W. was parked wallowing in the bush next to the National Road, and Gabriel Athiros and I trekked up the ravine to the right of Yellowwood Ravine. Two hours' interesting going, first through a throttling liana jungle, then up a succession of clean, smooth waterfalls, took us to the base of the largest edifice—the double tower adjacent to Smalblaar.

We built a large beacon on a boulder underneath a bottomless crack cutting up the right-hand half of the tower, then Gabriel commented that an anti-tetanus injection in his arm the previous day had now rendered it useless. Looking for another break, we found nothing easier, the other towers were even undercut! In order not to waste the beacon, we turned back to stare at the rock, to contemplate for the allotted period of three minutes before making a move. Then followed a pull-up, an awkward bridging step and layaway grip around the edge—and progress! From a height of two pitches we had to decide where to continue as the most obvious lines would lead to trouble higher up. So we followed a semi-'dassie traverse' to the left to a high sloping wall liberally splattered with 'finger jugs'. Dangling off a two-man stance, with an uninviting crack above, I watched Gabriel discover that the wall had fewer grips than appeared at first sight.

It was now apparent that the key pitch lay ahead; the problem to keep the grade moderate. Lowering myself backwards off the stance, I traversed across a bulging face to a spectacular and exposed corner where a strenuous pull-up landed me next to a loose block on which I slapped a sling. A further obscure traverse led to a chimney



fitted with custom-tailored hand-jambs at the back.

Higher still, we met another crack with two barricading grass bulges to surmount. Deciding that this type of 'thrutching' should be left to hedgehogs, I peered around for escape. Nipping around the corner, my breath sucked in, I scanned the sheer face unrolling above for corrugations. Checkmate—not yet! Sharp little incut grips were spaced in regular procession up to a narrow overhang, and even there they continued, providing an exhilarating pull through.

On some of the most superb rock we have yet climbed, another three faces like this followed, boosting our excitement higher in pitch, pitch by pitch! One last overhang and we would castle to safety—to become kings of the castle. At the summit we were thrilled to note that, except for an unknown massif near Du Toit's Peak, we had climbed the highest of the De La Bat Ridges to date.

## Technical Description

### THE CASTLE

(1) 100 feet 'F inf.': Climb the crack, using the face on the right a bit higher, then swinging back to the left. Exit on the right near the top.

(2) 40 feet 'E': From the sloping ledge move up a small recess, where a tuft of grass hides a good handhold, to beneath a thin crack. Climb up and across the face on the left to a large ledge below a grassy chimney.

(3) 40 feet 'D': Traverse to the left through a low slit and climb up to a stance beneath a sloping wall with a small overhang at the top right-hand corner.

(4) 90 feet 'F inf.': Climb half-way up the face, then move to the right to a layback crack. Ascend the crack, move past some grass, swing out on to the face on the left, and then continue back across to the right to a two-man stance.

(5) 60 feet 'F inf.': Step down, traverse out towards Molenaarsberg, and then climb up on the corner. Traverse to the right along a low footrail to the chimney in the corner. Climb up by jamming and exit at the top to a stance on either side.

(6) 60 feet 'E': Scramble up to a higher stance next to an obvious crack up the front of the buttress. Climb the right-hand chimney and continue up using the face on the left until the crack closes in. Move to the left and climb up the face to a stance on a platform.

(7) 25 feet 'D': Move across to the right and climb up to a stance in the corner.

(8) 110 feet 'F inf.': Climb up and to the left into the chimney. Continue past two grass bulges to a handrail on the left-hand wall. Traverse out to the corner on the left and round on to the face, past a tiny recess. Ascend on fingertip grips to a finger-rail under the overhang. Move to the left and pull through on to the wall above. Alternatively traverse to the left for a few feet below the overhang, then climb up to the same pull-through point. The stance is a little higher.

(9) 50 feet 'F inf.': Continue up the face above, which involves a tricky move to stand on a sloping ramp.

(10) 70 feet 'E': Move to the left and climb up the crack or the face, pulling through an overhang block at the top of the chimney. Scramble to the summit—the sporting way includes a noticeable twisted crack up on the high corner. To descend slog for half an hour across the back of the ridges towards Worcester and an hour's going down De La Bat Ravine ('A') leads back to the road.

## CASTLES OF OLD 160M; 18 \*\*\*

This is a composite route consisting of two or three pitches of a route called **The Castle** first climbed by Mike Scott and Gabriel Athiros (1966 MCSA journal), and the upper pitches of a route climbed by John Moss and Richard Smithers in about 1967, which was not written up. One or two of the lower pitches are not of the greatest quality, the others are excellent.

**START:** Walk past start of **No More Bells** and **Fire-start** and past two or three massive blocks. The route begins just past the orange wall and overhang, where there is an obvious break in the rock (somewhat chossy). There is a big cairn on top of a big rock.

**Pitch 1:** 40m, 17. Make a difficult step up and around the fins to the right. Climb the somewhat vegetated crack up past a roof on the right. Skirt a small roof on its left higher up. At the next roof stay right. Continue to a big ledge just below a big long black face topped by a square overhang. Belay here.

Scramble leftwards for about 20m to the second of the big left-facing corners (about 10m to the right of the **Crack-along** corner).

**Pitch 2:** 30m, 16. Climb the knobbly face just a few meters left of the left facing corner, trend a little left and straight up, either in the crack on the far right or in a slightly cleaner crack a little more left from the corner. Stance at obvious ledge.

**Pitch 3:** 30m, 18. Pull through a hard overhanging move (crux) and then climb up (some loose-looking blocks) to stance on a small ledge about 3m below the right-hand corner of the long narrow roof.

**Pitch 4:** 40m, 18. Pull up a sloping crack on the far right hand side of the roof, just left of the big chossy gully (this is the crux and is easier than it looks), continue climbing up this crack for about 15m until it starts petering out (below a small roof). Move left a metre or so (old peg), up a few metres on edges and then back right into a continuation of the crack. Follow this and successive cracks until you get to a narrow band with two cracks in it, take right crack and up to another blank-looking band of rock (about 3 metres high) which offers no gear. Climb the left-ward trending ramp up onto this band and belay about 5m below a crack in a big gnarly face.

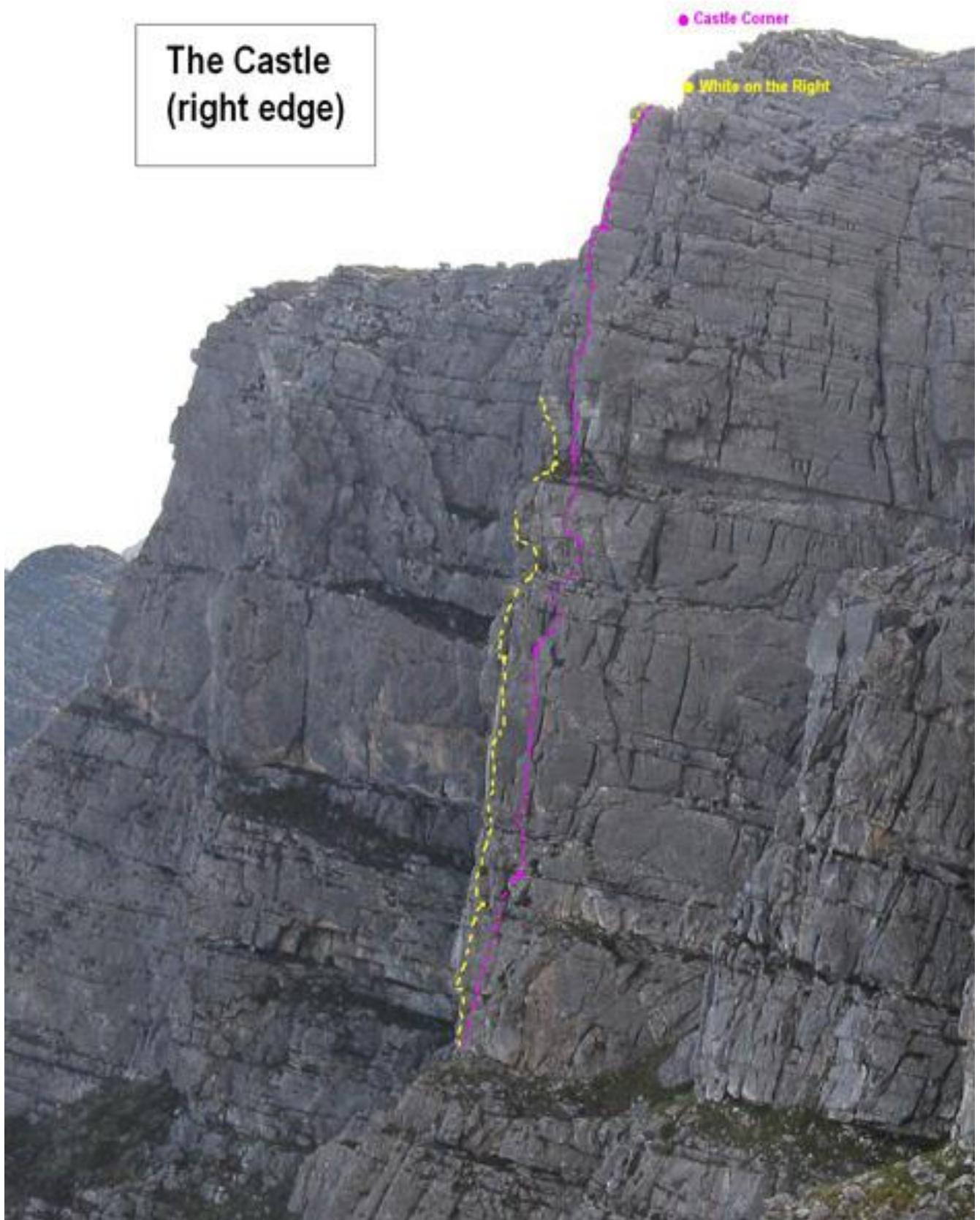
**Pitch 5:** 30m, 14. Climb up the crack and gnarly face to a ledge on big blocks with a cairn. From here scramble up and out.

*Climbed by Robert Zipplies, Ian Durbach & Galeo Saintz; January 2010.*



# THE CASTLE RIGHT EDGE

The Castle  
(right edge)



## WHITE ON THE RIGHT 180M 19 \*\*\*\*

**START:** Walk along the ledge at the base of the Castle to the right hand corner. The route starts up the obvious rib right of an off-width crack with a chock stone in it. Castle Corner starts on the face a meter or two to the right.

**Pitch 1:** 30m. 17. Ascend the juggy wall, tending slightly right until you reach the roof. Move left a couple of meters until it is possible to pull through the roof on jugs and climb to stance below large blocks.

**Pitch 2:** 48m. 18 (one move). The Sublime Crack pitch. Climb up over a series of blocks for 15m until you find yourself at the base of an open book. Climb up this and then diagonally right for a few moves, before moving up and left into the base of the Sublime Crack. Climb the crack until it peters out and then head right around the edge and up an exposed jug-infested face to a narrow ledge. A stunning pitch.

**Pitch 3:** 42m. 17. Above you is a chimney. Climb the right hand wall on huge jugs for 5m, and then traverse left, stepping across the chimney and onto a dinosaur-back ridge. Climb the ridge and then easy ground until you find yourself on a good ledge. To the left of a deep crack is an exposed little platform. Traverse to this, then up to the left for 15m on easy ground to a wide grassy ledge. Scramble up to the far left corner of the ledge.

**Pitch 4:** 30m. 19. Above and to the left is a pair of parallel cracks (with yellow edges) cutting through an overhanging bulge. Head up to and through these until able to move left onto a wildly exposed face. Traverse delicately to the left corner and then up to a square, sloping ledge. An exciting pitch.

**Pitch 5:** 50m. 16. Step up and right to climb a series of immaculate faces and cracks to the top. This can be easily broken into two pitches.

*FA: Rik De Decker, Roy White, Andy Wood; 29 May 2010.*

## CASTLE CORNER 180M 18 \*\*\*

**START:** Walk along the bottom of the lower buttress to the right hand corner past some huge blocks. 5m around the corner is a wide crack just before the continuous band of overhangs. This climb remains in the shade for most of the day.

**Pitch 1:** 45m, 16. Climb up just left of Peapod crack. Pull through a roof to the right. Head up the gully to the right for 15m to a stance underneath an overhanging nose.

**Pitch 2:** 45m, 15. Climb up to the left then move right onto the nose and follow giggle jugs straight up for 45m.

**Pitch 3:** 35m, 18. Climb up to the right onto a scoop. At top of scoop move left delicately left for a couple of meters. Move up over rounded bulge on rounded holds to a big ledge.

**Pitch 4:** 50m, 15. In the middle of the ledge is an obvious crack system with a large chimney to the right. Climb the cracks and face above keeping just to the right of the edge.

**Pitch 5:** 35, 13. Climb the wall just right of ridge. Follow your nose to top.

*FA: Fiona McIntosh, Roy White; 21 March 2010.*



# THE KNIGHT

This chess piece is the second biggest tower to the right from Smalblaar Ridge and is split into three portions by small gullies. The route starts roughly in the centre of the middle section (see large cairn).

**Pitch1:** 90 feet 'E inf.' (15): Traverse in from the left along a ledge to a point where there is an obvious break in the bulge. Climb through the bulge and continue up to a handrail. Traverse to the right for 10 feet before climbing to a stance below the overhang.

**Pitch 2** 90 feet 'E inf.' (15): Traverse to the right past a chimney to reach the base of an easy recess. Most of the dassie-crawling can be avoided by using footholds on the face below. Climb the recess and then follow an obvious traverse to the left to a small stance.

**Pitch:** 3 70 feet 'E sup.' (14): Traverse left below overhangs to gain bushy ledge.

**Pitch 4** 30 feet 'E inf.': 12 Climb the ramp that slopes up to the right.

**Pitch 5** 90 feet 'F inf.' (15) : Traverse out left, using a jug handle grip on the left-hand side of the small overhang to reach a crack. Climb the face above, pitted with jug grips, moving slightly to the left at the top to gain stance.

**Pitch 6:** 100 feet 'E': 14 Traverse back to the right to the base of a chimney. Ascend the chimney to a stance (use the exit on the left-hand wall).

**Pitch 7:** 90 feet 'E sup.' 14: Start up a chimney and traverse out to the right on to the face for 20 feet. Climb up a crack in the face to a stance. A further 15 feet of scrambling to another ledge could be included in this pitch.

**Pitch 8:** 60 feet 'F inf.': 15 Climb the left-hand wall of a shallow chimney which narrows higher up, and then exit on to the face on the left. Ascend the face, which is cut by a few cracks, to reach the stance. A further 80 feet of scrambling leads to the summit.

*FA: G. Mosely and A. Killick – 1967.*

## ROOK'S PAWN E inf.

The route climbs the smallest of the **Chess Pieces** immediately to the right and at the same level as **The Castle**

**Pitch 1:** 90 feet 'E inf.': Step off some large blocks on to a face and then step out to the left on to a rib. Climb this rib for some way before moving back to the right and continuing up to a ledge. Traverse 30 feet to the left.

**Pitch 2:** 50 feet 'E': Climb a face with mushroom grips. Move to the right near the top.

**Pitch 3:** 40 feet 'E': The pitch lies above and slightly to the right. Climb the short undercut face moving to the right to where it culminates in a knife-edge. Climb the knife-edge to a stance.

**Pitch4:** 60 feet 'D': Climb up a bushy ramp to a stance at the base of a large chimney.

**Pitch 5:** 30 feet 'E': Descending slightly, traverse to the left to a small stance beneath a flat face.

**Pitch6:** 50 feet 'F inf.': Stepping off a point, move up on small holds for 10 feet. Move to the right into a crack, and then climb a face to the right of the crack. Climb up a knife-edge to a cubbyhole stance. Scramble through a hole in the roof and continue up the face on the right (10 feet 'D') to a large ledge.

The most prominent feature of the next section of the buttress is a large chimney. Proceed to the base of it.

**Pitch 6:** 70 feet 'F': Start up a grassy crack. The first difficulty is encountered 20 feet up where the crack narrows to about 6 inches. A sequence of two difficult moves takes one from the crack into a peculiar wormhole which leads to a stance.

**Pitch 7:** 35 feet 'D': Chimney up above the stance, moving to the right into another cleft which leads to a large stance.

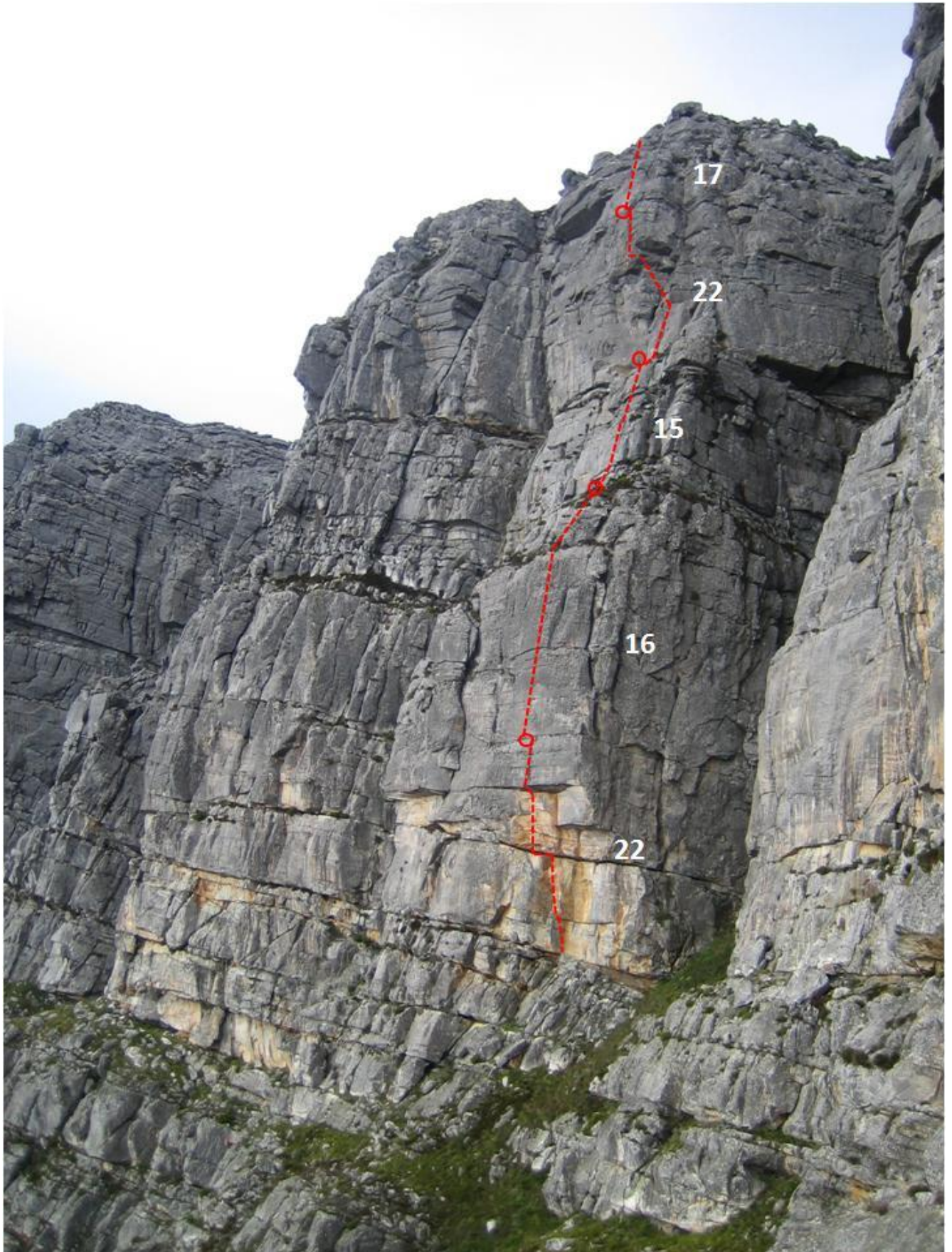
**Pitch9:** 100 feet 'E': Climb a very broken-up rib. Step out to the left and then continue to climb diagonally to the left across the face. Continue almost straight up to a very large platform.

We avoided the top band of rock by climbing a further 100 feet of 'D' grade in a recess to the right of the final section.

*FA: G. Moseley and A. M. Killick. – 1967.*



## KNIGHT RIDER 22





**Start:** On the far right of the Knight, (2nd last buttress on the chess-pieces) there is a scoop of compact orange rock beneath a 3m roof at 25m height. Start on a higher ledge at the left-hand side of this where the orange rock meets grey.

Pitch 1: 22: 40m: Start up two orange recesses, a step left and then straight up compact orange rock, past an unnerving grey flake to the roof and the apparently off-width crack that breaks the roof. Power through this, then cruise 10m up the giggle-jug-crack to stance on the boat-anchors on the left.

Pitch 2: 35m 16: Straight up the steepest (vertical), dappled wall on a stellar pattern of seams and juglets. Eases off after 10m. Stance at the back of a fairly big ledge.

Pitch 3: 25m 15: Straight up the 8m, 20cm-wide crack on ears, laybacks and juglets. Continue straight. Upon gaining the ledge move 6m left.

Pitch 4: 30m 22: Up an easy crack system (the right of two) to the roof system just inside the right-hand corner of the buttress. Left, then straight through the first dark overhang: a long stretch on some under-cling crimps leads to good rails, and left into the twin cracks that break the roof. Establish an exposed position on two ledgelets, then heel-hook, jam and crank! Continue up to a stance.

Pitch 5: 20m 17: About 7m left of the right-hand skyline. (Should be 1m left of stance) Start on a pedestal, past a good rail to some thin moves (delicate) and to the summit.

FA: Richard. Halsey and Anthony. Hall (Feb 2011)

DESCENT: The gully to the left of the Castle or walk over to Timerity.

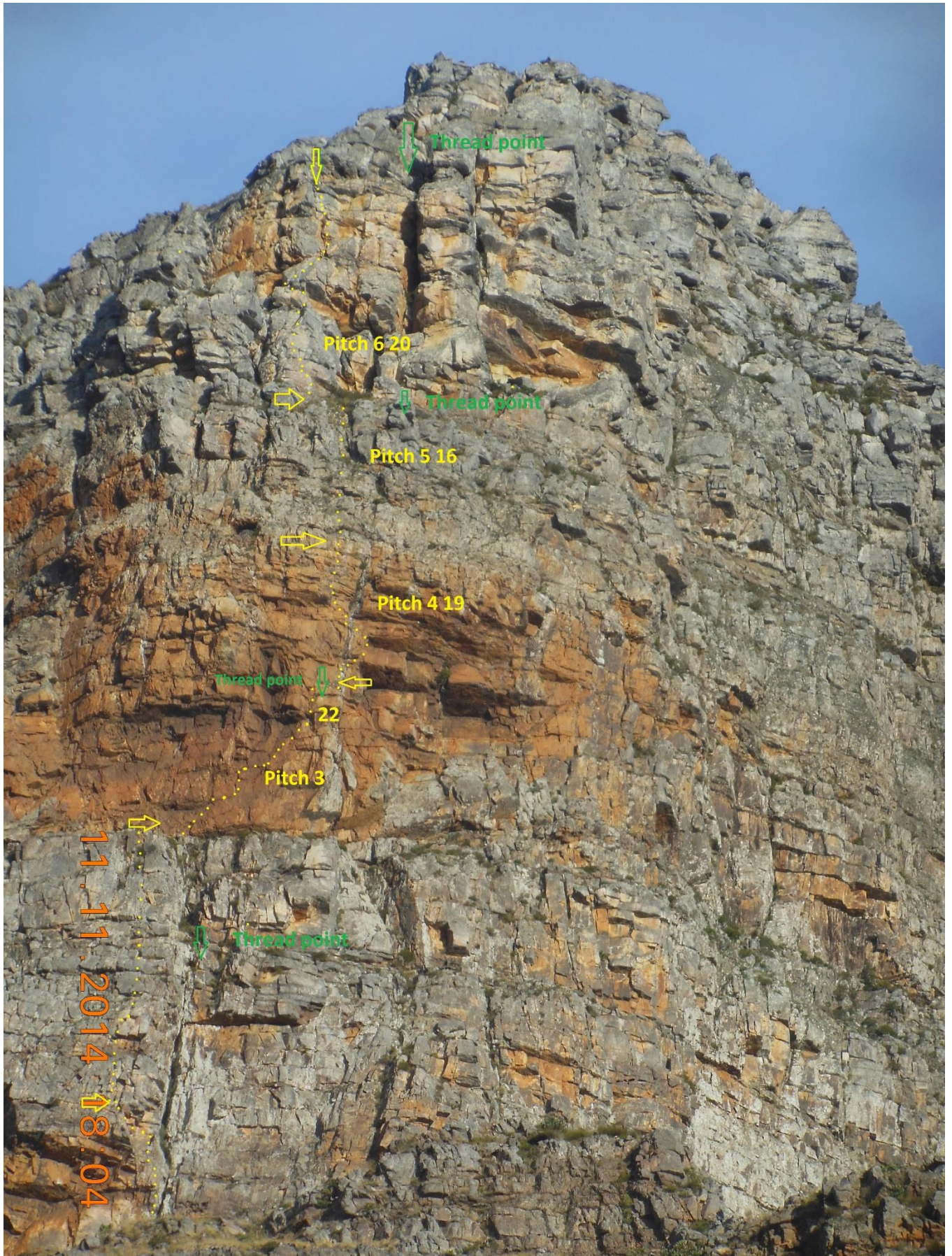


***When you see this skyline, you know you're in the right spot!***

***Knight Rider pitch 1 & 2***



## MASQUERADE 22 160m 22



Masquerade is a full on classic country route and a good day out. The quality of the rock and the pro is excellent but it has not yet been “climbed into condition”.



It is not a 5 star Krakadouw or Tafelberg route but it is certainly worth 4 stars in the context of the Du Toits' Kloof area. It is easily done in a day from Cape Town.

There are no really hard moves and the crux on the 22 pitch is protected by a high "top-rope" cam.

It is a route that one can climb all year round and in November it is shady till midday. If you leave Cape Town early enough you could probably do the whole route before the sun gets to you as it is light by 05h15 to start walking from November to February.

It is likely to dry quickly after rain within in a day or two as it is steep.

There is no trail to the base so the walk involves typical fynbos fun.

The best way to get there is probably to start directly below the face from the road, then continue up the gulley for about 30-40 minutes and then scramble up the ridge on the right. No rope is needed.

### **Approach.**

Masquerade buttress is 1 hour drive from Cape Town City located in Du Toit's Kloof on the south side of the N1 about a km or so from Yellowwood ravine. After travelling through the Huguenot toll tunnel, travel past the Du Toit's Kloof lodge and continue for about 5 km and look up to the right to see the buttress.

It is very obvious with a red feature in the middle of the face that looks like Zoro's Mask.

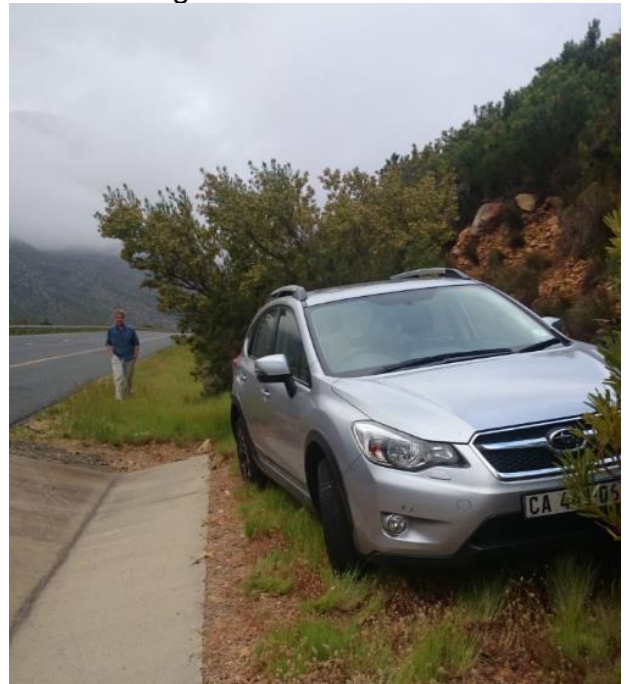




Continue until the highway becomes single carriage. Carefully make a U-Turn and after about 3 km slow down till you see this sign:



Continue 100m or so to park off the highway just as the concrete drainage channel starts directly below the pilon that is visible about 150m up the slope on the left. You can get your vehicle completely off the road and well hidden behind a large bush:



Walk down the highway for about 500m until you see a gully heading up to the base of the face. Continue up the gully finding the best way through the fynbos and then scramble up the right ridge to the start of the climb. (2 hours with gear).

**Start:** on the left of the obvious fault that splits the face.

**Pitch 1:** 20m 21. Start up small rock pillars just to the left of the fault. Follow the photo topo on your smart phone. The crux is a steep lay back but you can cheat by stepping right into the fault, climbing up a bit and then traversing back left. Head left up the left sloping ramp to a stance

**Pitch 2:** 50m 17 Find your way up clean grey rock to the jumbo ledge at the base of the red eyes.

**Pitch 3:** 25m 22. This is the plum pitch and diagonals its way to the crux which is protected by a very comfy cam above your head. Stance on a ledge to the right below the right "nostril". You will pass a thread abseil point just before the stance.

***Tony about to do the crux on pitch 3. Bruce following below.***



**Pitch 4:** 20m 19 Step up and the head up right to climb airily up the right side of the left nostril. Then traverse back left over the bridge of the nose to stance more or less above the previous stance on the right eyebrow.

**Pitch 5:** 16 30m Find your way on clean rock to a large ledge.

**Pitch 6:** 40m 20 Climb the clean grey “Krakadouw rock” face on crimps to easier ground. Continue until you have to a hard crank up the undercut block or cheat around to the left. Climb the recess to the ledge system.

#### **Descent.**

Find a thread with a biner about 20m to the right. Abseil 42m past the bushy ledge to a grey pillar and find another thread in situ.

With 60m ropes you should reach the large ledge below but there is no abseil point on it at present. With 50m ropes and with the first one to descend using one or two directionals abseil diagonally left to the thread at the stance at the start of pitch 4.

Abseil past the next big ledge about 35m and find the last thread.



***Tony on pitch 4 climbing up the right side of the left “nostril”.***

**Be careful abseiling.**

First Ascent: Charles Edelstein, Tony Dick and Bruce Daniel 11 November 2014



# ADDITIONAL PHOTO TOPOS

## LEKKER TIME AND ADVENTURE TIME PROFILE PHOTO TOPO





# DU TOIT'S KLOOF

## RIGHTEOUS CONDEMNATION 200m, 24 A3

**Approach:** Park off the side of the N1 freeway at the Rawsonville turn off. Park next to a gate with Eskom signage.

Walk or cycle one or two kilometres along the flat track that doubles back up the Du Toits Kloof valley towards an Eskom mast. Reach a point where big power lines cross the track. A hundred metres or so further find a 1m-high rock wall a little upslope of the track. Bushes behind the wall are a great place to leave bicycles. From this point head up the slope angling to the left to intersect a small, dry river bed. After walking up the river bed for about 30 minutes you get your first view of the rock face up a side-valley to the right. Leave the river bed to the right and head up the steep slope directly towards the big face, else better still, scramble the dry water course to the right of the steep slope until high up then leave it and go up to the left to the rock face. Important note: this water course heads up and rightwards into a nek between the main face and a big buttress that shields it from the car park. It is this water course that is the descent route, so this is a handy place to leave stuff (water, food, etc) to be collected on the way down.



**Start:** The route starts directly below the biggest, most over-hanging part of the face. The lower 40% of the wall is vertical grey rock. Above that it is fearsome dark brown in the centre, while left and right of it the rock is bright orange. The route climbs through the brown rock. At the base of



the wall find some nice trees where the face starts off with five to ten metres of overhanging orange rock. The route starts towards the right end of the steep orange bit of wall and is marked by a cairn.

#### **Pitch 1 20m 22:**

Get off the ground at the cairn and climb up to the obvious rail 4m up. Head right for a couple of metres then up onto grey rock. Continue up, trending slightly left, to a roof with cascading creepers. Stance on a ledge to the left of the creepers.

#### **Pitch 2 20m 18:**

From the left of the ledge head directly up until reaching a big ledge to stance. Find a single rap-line bolt 4m above the ledge.

#### **Pitch 3 40m 19:**

Walk a few metres to the right then climb up to the break that goes through the small roof 6m up. Once over the break do an easy 30m traverse to the left to a point where you can see a small tree in the dihedral above.

#### **Pitch 4 25m 19:**

Climb up easily to the tree then pass it to the left. Traverse right and clamber over the tree. Climb the very aesthetic hand crack above to reach the big Breakfast Ledge.

#### **Pitch 5 20m 20:**

At the back of the Breakfast Ledge climb the excellent crack straight up, then a metre or two to the right to bypass a roof, then straight up again to a huge roof. While pressed up against the huge roof, awkwardly traverse to the right for 5m to reach a decent stance supplemented with a bolt (This is a rap-line leading to another bolt 50m straight down – the one above the second pitch).

#### **Pitch 6 30m 22 A3:**

Down a big bottle of brave, with a splash of commitment added, to take on the huge Roof Pitch. Stretch out to a piton, then a bolt, then make some difficult aid moves on cams to reach another bolt. Down a bigger bottle of brave and commit to free-climbing. Make a couple of moves on the face to the right then take the steeper line to the left that has some reasonable hidden holds. Get established above the overhanging stuff then head up and right to some good rails. Head up and right up an obvious fault line using the arête on its right to reach a small ledge with a stance on the right.

#### **Pitch 7 25m 24:**

The Spikes Pitch – it only gets wilder. From the stance climb up a few metres then right to the obvious crack through the steep bulge to get to the spikes. Without pulling on the tempting spikes, get over the bulge and head up to the roof. Traverse right to get around the roof then step back across above it. Climb up slightly leftwards to get into a recess capped by a roof. Climb directly through and above the little roof cap, then a few metres to the left to reach a stance.

#### **Pitch 8 40m 23:**

Now for the toughest pitch – the Bat Pitch. Climb up to the big roof then rail right to get around it. Pull hard and high to a non-returnable lay-away. Climb up to the left to reach a cave-like

overhang. Move left and balance up. Step out airily and up a steep arête. Go up and left through an overhanging break to get onto a big grassy ledge with a stance at the back.

**Pitch 9 25m 15:**

Scramble up the obvious easy gully to stance on the summit.

**Descent:** Walk right trending downwards for a few hundred metres following big beacons. Then straight down a shallow rocky valley for a few hundred metres following beacons until reaching the nek between the main part of the mountain and the big protruding buttress (as mentioned in the Approach). Turn right into the nek and down the other side towards the wall. Follow beacons down the steep slope between waboom trees until a point where it is necessary to traverse right into the watercourse and across it to the slope on the other side. Go down the slope for 40m then back into the watercourse and continue down to your water stash then return the way you came.

**First ascent:** Guy Paterson-Jones and Hilton Davies, 22 February 2015.



**BLACK WATERFALL FACE “F” 17**

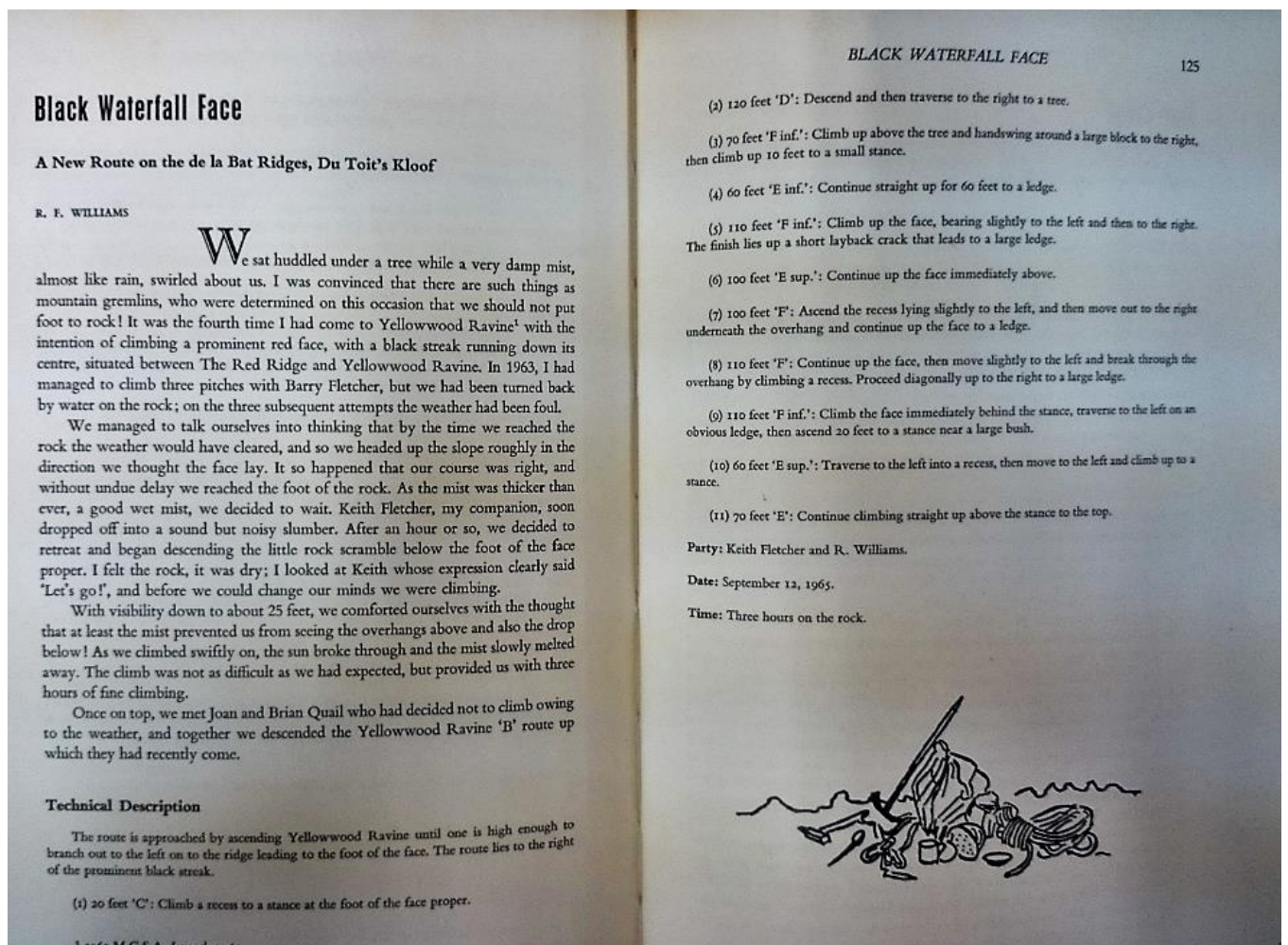


**Start:** Walk up the trail and as soon as you have done the short scramble as described continue a few metres higher and then walk into the forest where a cairn marks the entrance. Weave more or less horizontally to a delightful shady tea spot at the stream (that is seasonal). Follow cairns left and up to exit the forest.

Scramble up the rib to where the rock buttress steepens. Then head left to the gully as described in the route description.



FA K Fletcher and R Williams 1965



## NOT THE BEST TIME 19\*\*

Start: Walk up the trail and as soon as you have done the short scramble as described continue a few metres higher and then walk into the forest where a cairn marks the entrance. Weave more or less horizontally to a delightful shady tea spot at the stream (that is seasonal). Follow cairns left and up to exit the forest.

Scramble up the rib to the left to where the rock buttress steepens.

**Pitch 1:** 35m 19 Find your way up the front of the buttress on clean grey rock to a stance

**Pitch 2:** 35m 19 Continue up the clean grey rock with the odd tricky move to a stance.

**Pitch 3:** 40m 19+ Climb towards the overhang on dodgy rock, skirt it on the right and do tricky moves just above the lip to the left. Continue up to ledge on chossy rock.

**Pitch 4:** 25m 19 Climb the overlap on gnarly rock to a lower off if you can find it. Or continue finding your way up to the ridge

FA Ascent C Edelstein and B Daniel Mid 2014



# SUBLIME TIME CRAG

Tony Dick, Neels Havenga, Deon Van Zyl, Bruce Daniel and I recently (Mid 2014) developed the **Sublime Time Buttress** on the West facing buttress of the lower **Yellowwood Ravine**. We are not the first party to explore that crag. In 1981 Mike Scott with Peter De Tolly and John Moss did the "Red Waterfall route" at "F" grade. **Sublime Time** is the plum route there but all the climbing is excellent with the top red face providing 5 star quality. The routes are 140 to 160m long and can be done in 4 or 5 pitches. There is a very user friendly abseil descent on the right that may require replacement of the "tat", preferably with stainless steel chain. All the points entail threads and there is no fixed gear. Download high res photos on a smart phone and use it as a route guide as you climb by magnifying the picture to see the detail!

The approach starts at the same place from the N1 as the other Yellowwood routes. Continue to the Pilon. Walk another 20 minutes or so passing through a shallow gulley and then soon after there is a short corner scramble of around 3m. Continue up and left for about 30m and spot a cairn adjacent to the forest. Once in the forest go down and left behind a boulder, squeeze past a tree and then head up left for about 30m following cairns. Have tea at the stream. If it is dry go up about 20-30m and find a black barrel with water. Follow cairns diagonally out left over large white boulders and continue up the broken grey ramp for around 250m until at the base of the routes. Stay on the clean grey rock slabs and avoid the loose gullies on each side.

**Sublime Time** is the route to do but once you do the 19 pitch rap off and do the 20 pitch on the right. It is superb. You have plenty of time to do **Some Time** as well in a normal day if it is not too hot and you will end up having done 320m (1000ft) or so of excellent moderate climbing.

**Descent:** There is a very user friendly abseil descent on the right that may require replacement of the "tat", preferably with stainless steel chain. All the points entail threads and there is no fixed gear. Download high res photos on a smart phone and use it as a route guide as you climb by magnifying the picture to see the detail!



## RED FACED WATERFALL ROUTE F2

**Start:** Walk up the trail and as soon as you have done the short scramble as described continue a few metre higher and then walk into the forest where a cairn marks the entrance. Weave more or less horizontally to a delightful shady tea spot at the stream (that is seasonal). Follow cairns left and up to exit the forest.

As for all the Sublime Time routes scramble up the right grey rib of rock for 120m or so to where it steepens at a long wide ledge. E3. (Most people would prefer a rope here and there.)

**Pitch 1:** F1. Climb diagonally right across some shiny slabs.

**Pitch 2:** F1 Continue after an awkward start in a recess to a stance.

**Pitch 3:** E1 A pitch up the shattered pillar on the corner leads to a long ledge which can be traversed right into the top of Yellowwood ravine.

**Pitch 4:** F1 An undercut start on the left leads right into a steep broken recess of reddish rock. At the long overhang traverse left onto a ledge.

**Pitch 5:** F2 Around the corner on the left fight your way through a tree into a chimney crack and climb this to the top. Or climb the slab above the ledge (F3).

**Descent:** Walk right along the ledge to the abseil point.

First Ascent: John Moss, Peter De Tolley and Mike Scott. 1981

***Andi Tromp belaying Dion Tromp on Red Waterfall Face. Photo: Mike Scott***

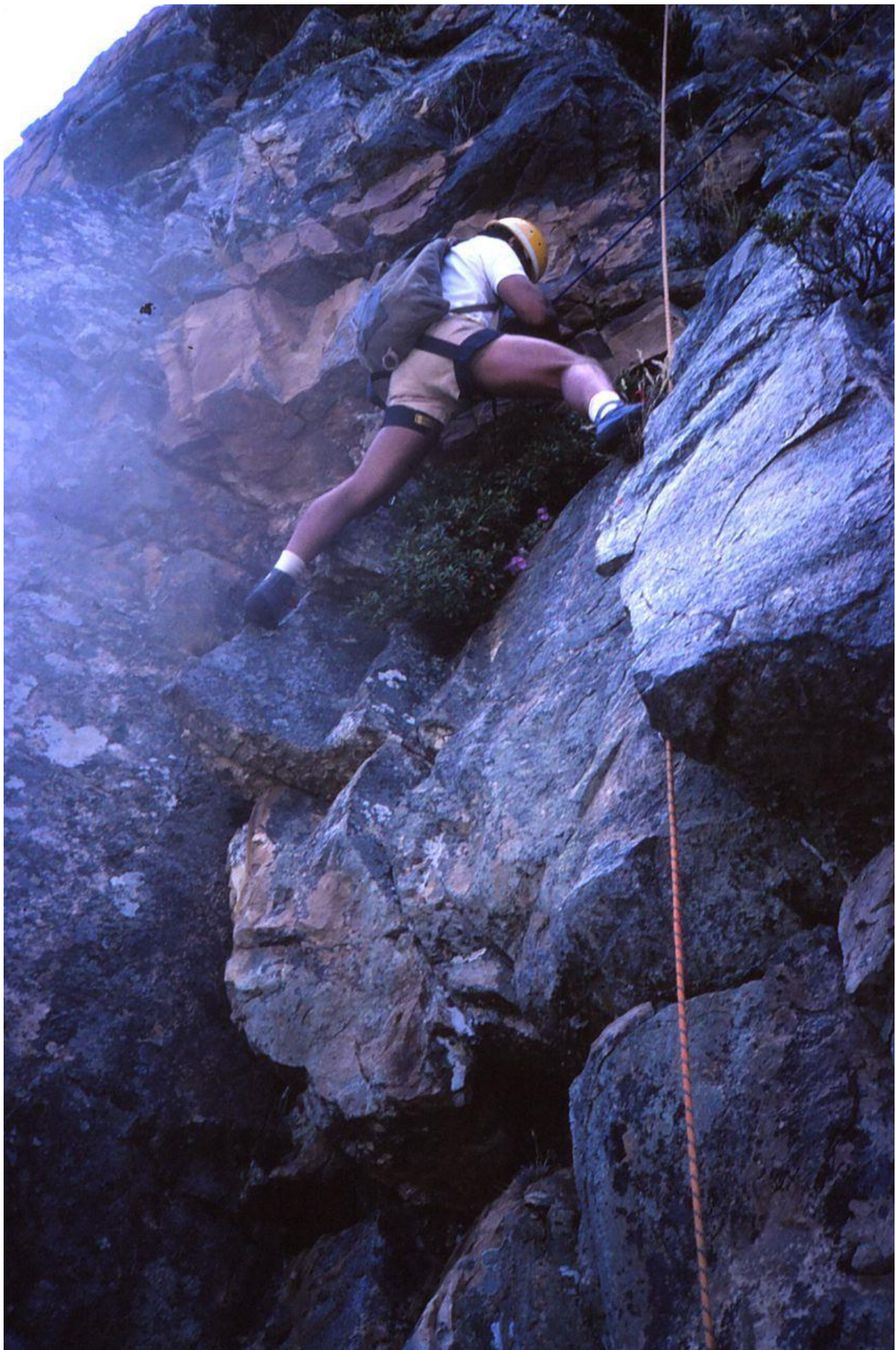






***Dion Tromp leading on Red Faced Waterfall route. Photo: Mike Scott***





*Peter De Tolley on the crux of Red Faced Waterfall route. Picture: Mike Scott*







## TIME LIMIT 200M 20 \*\*\*\*

The first pitch is kind of shared with **Quality Time**. Thereafter follows 4 pleasant fairly tricky pitches.



First Ascent: Charles Edelstein and Josh Mönch 27 Sep 2017



Descent: The route ends a pitch higher than the other routes at **Sublime Time Crag**. There is an obvious abseil point round a horn to get down this pitch. Re-use of the point after a year or so will require a back-up of a small length of tat. Once down to the next ledge 20m below head south along the bushy ledge about 30m (towards Yellowwood Amphitheatre) and the tat around the next Abseil Point is easily visible. This tat is sun-faded as at Sep 2017 and will probably require replacement with rope or chain that is at least 60cm in circumference.

## **QUALITY TIME 140M 16 \*\*\*\*\***

First Ascent: Charles Edelstein and Margaret Milne October 2014

## **SOME TIME 140M 20 \*\*\*\*\***

First Ascent: Charles Edelstein, Tony Dick and Bruce Daniel November 2014

## **SUBLIME TIME 150M 19 OR 20 \*\*\*\*\***

First Ascent: Charles Edelstein and Deon van Zyl October 2014

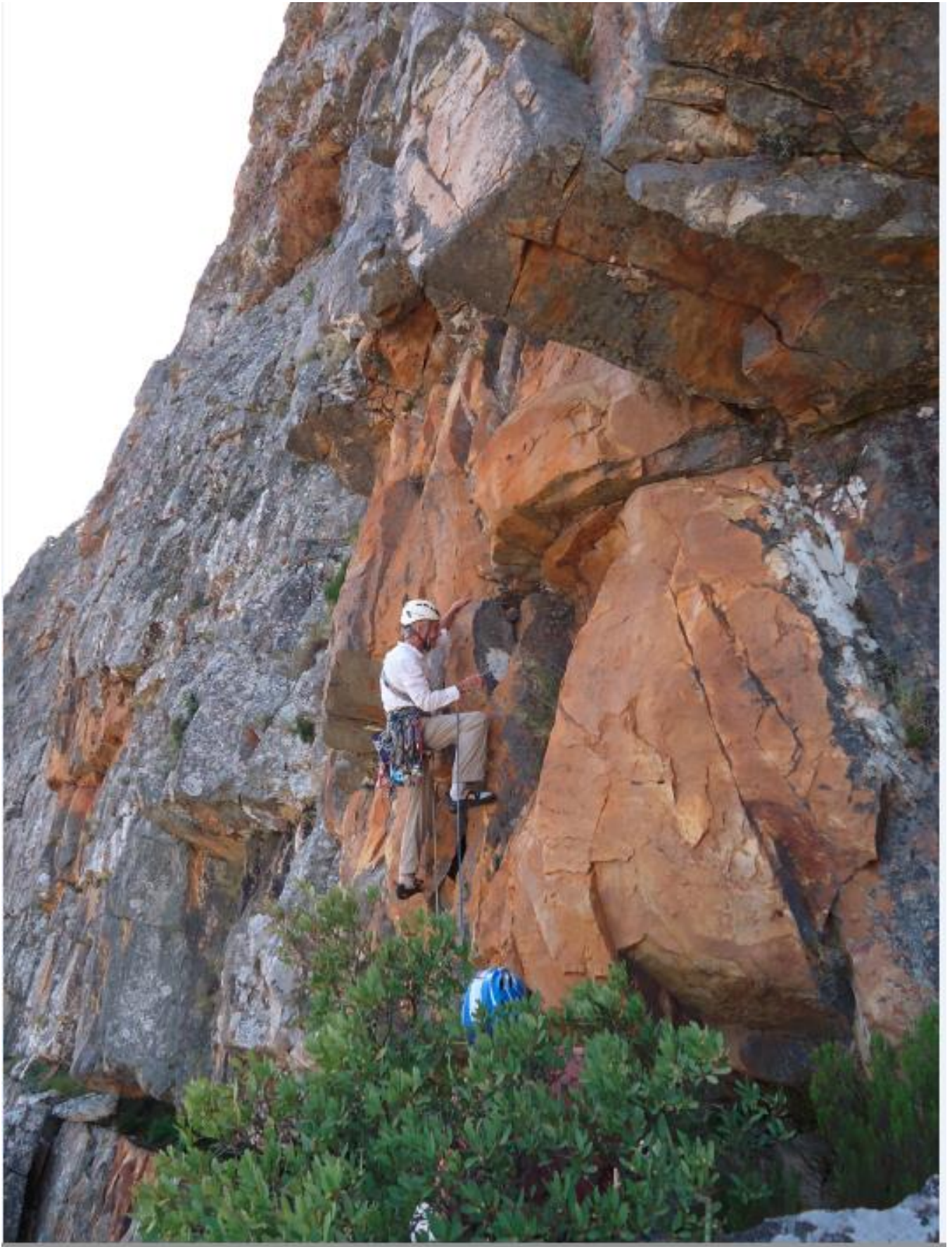
## **TRIVIAL TIME 160M 16 \*\*\***

First ascent: Charles Edelstein, Tony Dick and Bruce Daniel, November 2014



*A silly grin from Deon on Sublime Time October 2014: Photo C Edelstein*





**Tony Dick setting off on the final pitch of "Some Time" 19. Nov 2014. Photo C Edelstein**





***Bruce Daniel cranking through the crux of Sublime Time. Nov 2014. Photo C Edelstein***

# SMALL TIME CRAG



**Small Time**, so named because it has only one pitch routes, is situated on the right side (west side) of Yellowwood ravine and is noticeable by the striking left facing corner ("**Classic Corner**") visible from the approach trail just before exiting the trail to traverse the boulder scree. This is about 15 minutes short of reaching the main amphitheatre. 4 new routes were established by Charles Edelstein and David Webster on the 9 February 2016. They are all excellent quality on good rock that is not typical of the Main Wall or East Buttress routes. The rock is more compact and similar to Cederberg rock.

**"Not Much Time" 21** is excellent and varied with a steep airy finish.



**“A Bit more Time”** 22 has a boulder start and then a hard move from the first rail if you are short – more like 23 than 22.



*Snort after the boulder move on “A Bit More Time” 22+. Photo Dave Webster Feb 2016*

**“Small Time”** is superb and solid 19. It climbs the excellent crack visible on the right in the photo.

**“Classic Corner”** 19m is quite a serious lead unless you have a No 4 Camelot.

The crag gets early sun so nice in winter and if you have limited time. It also gets early afternoon shade so if you have done one of the East Buttress routes and have “A Bit more Time”, then these routes can provide a more fulfilling day.

Descent is best by abseiling off the obvious tree although there is no fixed point there now. There is also a very obvious prong about 5metres right of the tree that can be used as a convenient temporary point.

Walking off is possible by first going up a few metres and then left but requires doing one tricky move.

The routes are all a few metres less than 30m.